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# The Presbyterian Record

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### 2005

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| Child poverty stats scandalous, says moderator        | Amy MacLachlan               | January | 11   |
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| Presbyterian and Anglican churches victims of arson   | Amy MacLachlan               | January | 11   |
| Salvadoran street minister says God hates religiosity | Amy MacLachlan               | January | 15   |
| Sentimental artifacts stolen from Alberta church      | Amy MacLachlan               | January | 8    |
| Small church, big anniversary                         | Amy MacLachlan               | January | 13   |
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| Naude widow responds to Moderator  | Amy MacLachlan               | February | 9  |
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| Gender violence a weapon of war  | <i>ENI</i>                   | April    | 13 |
| Leader joins the pack  | Amy MacLachlan               | April    | 9  |
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| PC(USA), WCC use divestment in Israel  | <i>ENI</i>                   | April    | 12 |
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| Assembly Council adopts new stipend policy   | Amy MacLachlan               | May      | 13 |
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| Class action seeks billions in damages                   | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 11   |
| Living history a loving chapel                           | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 12   |
| Overcoming the scourge of malnutrition                   | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 10   |
| PC(USA) membership drops significantly                   | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 15   |
| Presbyterian college helps develop lay leadership        | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 14   |
| Presbyterians honour the pope for his ecumenical efforts | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 8, 9 |
| Raising Funds  | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 8    |
| Refugee rights petition put on hold                      | Amy MacLachlan          | May         | 12   |
| Anglicans continue study of same-sex blessings           | <i>Anglican Journal</i> | June        | 14   |
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| China seeks ministers for post-denominational church     | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 10   |
| Churches included in Heritage bill                       | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 16   |
| Cycling for unity  | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 15   |
| Ecumenical Pope, The                                     | Joseph Sinasac          | June        | 8    |
| European Christian leaders applaud anti-euthanasia vote  | Jonathan Luxmore        | June        | 9    |
| Fee raps Ottawa over aid                                 | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 14   |
| Mexican mine saved from Metallica                        | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 15   |
| Other Presbyterian record, The                           | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 11   |
| Rainbow of faith traditions support same-sex marriage, A | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 17   |
| Record welcomes new art director                         |                         | June        | 17   |
| Renovated and re-dedicated                               | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 16   |
| Wartime memorial brings atrocities to light              | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 11   |
| WCC discusses aspects of globalization                   | Stephen Brown           | June        | 9    |
| Women combine resources for peach                        |                         | June        | 11   |
| Youth starve for those who have AIDS                     | Amy MacLachlan          | June        | 13   |
| Aiming to end child poverty                              | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 17   |
| Biking for Bibles  |                         | July/August | 16   |
| Church staff raises money for girls with rare disorder   | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 15   |
| Fellowship Centre says it faces funding crisis           | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 10   |
| Food aid to North Korea                                  | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 17   |
| Healing the church's relationship with God               | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 14   |
| Iacobucci to oversee residential schools claims          | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 11   |
| Job Well Done, A   |                         | July/August | 10   |
| Kanata Presbyterian buzzes in U.S. spelling bee, A       | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 14   |
| Megachurches multiply in U.S.                            | Amy MacLachlan          | July/August | 16   |
| Mennonites join council                                  |                         | July/August | 16   |
| Minister denounces casual sex among nursing students     | <i>ENI</i>              | July/August | 16   |
| Montgomery's manse now a museum                          |                         | July/August | 45   |
| Post-tsunami work continues                              |                         | July/August | 16   |
| Taiwan celebrates 140 years of Protestant                |                         |             |      |





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| ministry   | <i>Taiwan Church News</i>                                      | July/August | 17    |
| Testing the waters                                       | <i>Diocese of Toronto web news</i>                             | July/August | 14    |
| Women give voice to Africa's voiceless                   | Michael McAteer  | July/August | 12    |
| Zimbabweans share in helping twins                       | Amy MacLachlan   | July/August | 13    |
| Children's worship program celebrated                    | Amy MacLachlan   | September   | 17    |
| Church builds boats for Sri Lanka                        | Amy MacLachlan   | September   | 11    |
| Divestment not anti-semitic says WCC                     | <i>WCC</i>   | September   | 14    |
| Economic leverage  | <i>ENI</i>   | September   | 15    |
| Elders' conference has youthful flair                    | Amy Cameron  | September   | 13    |
| Fatwa against terrorism                                  | Chris Herlinger, <i>ENI</i>                                    | September   | 17    |
| G8 does not make poverty history                         | <i>ENI</i>   | September   | 11    |
| Gospel gets real   |  | September   | 16    |
| Israel invites Pope                                      | Michele Green, <i>ENI</i>                                      | September   | 15    |
| Israel policies criticized                               | Amy MacLachlan with files from <i>WCC</i> and <i>Sabeel</i>    | September   | 14    |
| Kenora fellowship centre update                          | Amy MacLachlan   | September   | 11    |
| Megachurch or multiplex?                                 | <i>ENI</i>   | September   | 16    |
| Montreal reconfigures                                    | Amy Cameron  | September   | 13    |
| Tsunami-swept areas still being rebuilt                  | Amy MacLachlan   | September   | 10    |
| WMS visits Koreans in Japan                              | Margaret McGillivray   | September   | 12    |
| Christians' ignorance of forgiveness called 'scandalous' | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 16    |
| Church coordinates relief after Katrina damage           | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 11    |
| Kenyans wary of Saria                                    | <i>ENI</i>   | October     | 12    |
| Malvern promotes peace and harmony                       | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 10    |
| Muslims debate Sharia in Ontario                         | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 12-13 |
| Nigerians fear more Islamization                         | <i>ENI</i>   | October     | 12    |
| Nutrition seen as source of self-confidence              | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 15    |
| Responding to Niger's 'silent famine'                    | Amy MacLachlan with files from <i>PWS&amp;D</i> and <i>ACT</i> | October     | 14    |
| Same-sex marriage minister                               | Files from <i>The Church Herald</i>                            | October     | 16    |
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| Stratford exhibits AIDS photos                           | Amy MacLachlan   | October     | 17    |
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| Kitchener recovers after loss                            | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 10    |
| New position for Rick Fee                                | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 15    |
| Ontario bans religious tribunals                         | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 11    |
| Responding to Katrina's devastation                      | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 12    |
| Small arms need control                                  | Amy MacLachlan with <i>Project Ploughshares</i> files          | November    | 13    |
| The Book Room Bestsellers                                |  | November    | 10    |
| To fund or not to fund                                   | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 10    |
| Unclaimed cemetery vandalized                            | Amy MacLachlan   | November    | 12    |
| Welcomed change to federal food aid rules                | Amy MacLachlan with <i>CFGB</i> files                          | November    | 11    |
| Christians changing China                                | Elinor & Francis Wong, <i>ENI</i>                              | December    | 16    |
| Churches aid earthquake victims in Pakistan              | <i>PWS&amp;D</i>   | December    | 13    |



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| Churches and Ottawa responsible for abuse                | <i>CP</i>              | December | 16    |
| Churches seek meeting with Annan about<br>global poverty | <i>ENI</i>             | December | 13    |
| Churches tackle school bullying                          | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 15    |
| Colombia's indigenous groups caught in the middle        | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 16-17 |
| Dorothy suggests....                                     | Dorothy Henderson      | December | 15    |
| God kept me alive for some purpose                       | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 14    |
| Guatemala damaged by Stan                                | Kenneth Kim            | December | 11-12 |
| Inner-city mission readies for big move                  | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 14    |
| Joe Reed moves on from Central America                   | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 11-13 |
| Knox, PC Montreal muse a merger                          | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 12    |
| More religion, please                                    | <i>Ipsos-Reid Poll</i> | December | 17    |
| One step forward, two steps back                         | Amy MacLachlan         | December | 17    |

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| Courtenay, Rev. Ronald           | January 15, 2005  | April    | 47   |
| Davidson, Kristian R.            | January 7, 2005   | June     | 46   |
| Duncan, Rev. Dr. Graeme          | July 3, 2005      | November | 43   |
| Evans, Rev. Dr. James Walwyn     | November 6, 2004  | January  | 47   |
| Lee, Rev. Jang Woo               | November 26, 2004 | March    | 46   |
| Davidson, Rev. Kris              | January 7, 2005   | March    | 46   |
| Bailey, Rev. Dr. Thomas Melville | January 29, 2005  | March    | 46   |
| Beattie, Rev. Robert Hartley     | January 28, 2005  | April    | 47   |
| Young, Rev. Frederick Norman     | February 8, 2005  | April    | 47   |

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| Help! We're breaking out in teenagers!    |               | February    | 45   |
| I used to have answers...now I have kids! |               | April       | 42   |
| Love letter to his son, A                 |               | June        | 35   |
| Parties, parenting and praying            |               | March       | 38   |
| Remembrance of Christmases past           |               | December    | 34   |
| Superglue and wayward youths              |               | July/August | 35   |
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| Next Year Country       | Barb Alston            | July/August | 51   |
| No Name Poem            | John Joseph Jack James | June        | 28   |
| The Cactus and the Rose | John Joseph Jack James | June        | 28   |
| The Face of Aids        | Patricia Earl          | June        | 13   |
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**Poetry (con't.)**

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**POP CHRISTIANITY**

|   | Andrew Faiz | Issue       | Page |
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| Drowning out the drones                     |             | September   | 38   |
| Have a merry materialism month              |             | December    | 10   |
| Modest proposal for our church buildings, A |             | May         | 32   |
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| Not so big, not so freaky                   |             | April       | 38   |
| Old tosh and balderdash                     |             | October     | 38   |
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| Candidates address essential issues for church's future: 131 <sup>st</sup> General Assembly Nominees for Moderator | Amy MacLachlan | February    | 14   |
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| ➤ Claiming the joy of our faith  |                |             | 18   |
| ➤ Enjoy it, Fee advises  |                |             | 19   |
| ➤ Heard but not counted  |                |             | 22   |
| ➤ Housing is not salary  |                |             | 21   |
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| Full steam ahead for Presbytery of Kingston | Amy MacLachlan | March        | 39          |
| Following in Jesus' footsteps               | Amy MacLachlan | May          | 41          |
| Historic but evolving                       | Amy MacLachlan | December     | 44-45       |
| Keeping ministry healthy and whole          | Amy MacLachlan | October      | 44-45       |
| Linking mission to multiculturalism         | Amy MacLachlan | July/August  | 44          |
| Presbytery has history of helping others    | Amy MacLachlan | January      | 36          |
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| Lessons in courage                          | Amy MacLachlan                | October      | 31          |
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| Stumped on hour one                         | Amy Cameron                   | July/August  | 30          |
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| Finding Christ in a fetid Ethiopian jail   | Paula Todd    | July/August  | 25          |
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## CONTRIBUTORS

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Coren and Faiz on Christian Right and wrong • Seeking peace in Sudan • Reader survey

# PRESBYTERIAN Record

January 2005

## The Pastoral Pastor

Reviving the rural church

Moderator demands action  
on poverty and AIDS







Do you take your faith to work?  
Take it for a walk?

How do you believe God directs your life, as you  
Play after school?

Do your homework?

Make dinner for the family?

Do the laundry, then the dishes?

Go to work?

Think about a career?

Raise your children?

Take care of your parents?

Wish and wait for hockey to return?

How does your faith affect your life?

How does it make you look at  
the world around you?

## ***Record your thoughts for other Presbyterians***

650 words maximum.

Photos welcome —

300 dpi min., high quality JPEG

Send to: [pcrecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pcrecord@presbyterian.ca)



Photo by Barb Alston

## 22 Rural churches must reclaim God's covenant

Empowering rural Christians  
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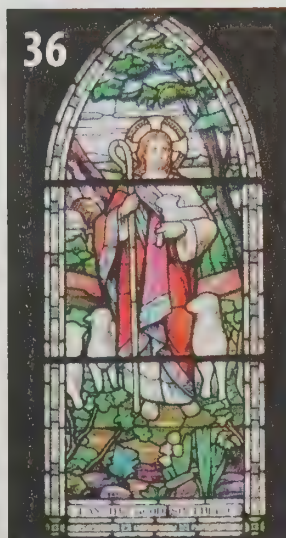
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# Child poverty truly threatens the family

A few weeks ago, a report was released suggesting more than one million children in Canada are living below the poverty line. Campaign 2000, a national watchdog organization, said more than 15 per cent of Canadian children live in low-income families who earn less than two-thirds the national median hourly wage of about \$10. Moderator Rick Fee was forthright in his reaction, calling the situation "a real scandal." It is.

The report was issued 15 years after all parties in the House of Commons vowed to fix the problem of child poverty. The rate was about the same then, although three times the rate of most northern European countries, and actually climbed to almost 22 per cent in 1996. In response to the recent news, the federal Social Development Department offered the lame defence that Statistics Canada figures from 2002 indicate the child poverty rate is closer to 10 per cent, or 700,000 children.

Pick whichever figure you like, how is it that so many children should live in anything approaching that kind of poverty in an immensely rich country like Canada? This is an issue that truly jeopardizes the sanctity of the family and ought to give every politician guilt pangs. But in the wake of the story, few voices of concern were heard. Ken Dryden, the Social Development Minister, said he had no ideas of how to fix the problem.

It seems that everyone was waiting for the Supreme Court to render its opinion on proposed federal same-sex marriage legislation. On this, politicians have had plenty to say, as have several lobby groups that purport to support the family. Focus on the Family, REAL Women and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada all have issued news releases and papers on their perceived threat to the family from permitting same-sex marriage. None of them had anything to say about child poverty. They might well have raised the issue of provinces clawing back federal aid from welfare families.

Families earning below \$22,600 receive a federal supplement of about \$125 a month for each child. But only New Brunswick and Manitoba don't withhold that supplementary benefit from welfare and disability recipients. That is unconscionably kicking families while they are down. While few solutions to poverty are straightforward, taking with one hand what has been given by another is not one of them.

As for pending same-sex legislation, faith organizations appear to have little to fear. Same-sex marriage is not being imposed on religious groups. The court was very clear that freedom of religion has a wide scope and will protect opponents of

same-sex marriage. Ministers will not be forced to marry a homosexual couple so long as the application of refusal is consistently applied. If a faith group forbids same-sex unions, everyone must abide by that. If a faith says it's up to the minister or temple or congregation, that too must be consistently followed. The same rules apply today: an Orthodox rabbi cannot be compelled to marry a man and a woman who are not Orthodox.

For those who are truly worried about families, there is another issue of far greater importance. Moderator Fee has set a goal of raising \$500,000 over two years for various projects to do with AIDS in Africa. As of mid-December, less than \$100,000 had come in. That is disappointingly low. AIDS is not only robbing Africa of its workforce (and therefore its ability to feed itself and become economically self-sufficient) but it is leaving hundreds of thousands of orphaned children to care for themselves and their younger siblings. These are families in real need, and we can help them. Besides giving to the church, politicians need to be lobbied about Canada's embarrassing level of international aid. Politicians' obsession over the same-sex issue is fueled by anxious voices. Christians need to raise their voices about issues that truly focus on the health of families at home and abroad.

A butterfly recently entered my life rather unexpectedly. It seems a caterpillar on some cabbage flowers slipped away to create a chrysalis on a small lampshade, because one morning at breakfast there was a little flutter and suddenly there was a small, pale green butterfly at the picture window looking out at the back garden.

With no source of nectar in the house, I put a pinch of sugar on the back of two fingers with a few drops of water to create a trough, and the butterfly hopped up for a drink. The butterfly has been around for 10 days now and still prefers to gaze out at the garden. I am its only source of food.

God has given us the capacity for deep and loving human relationships, as well as ones with other creatures, even if they are ephemeral. If God created the butterfly, the least I can do is care for it as best I can. And are humans not of more value than butterflies? God's children continue to cry out, not for ideological angst, but for concrete expressions of love and care.

*David Harris*

## Congregations that pray together, stay together

Your October issue emphasizes the need for church growth but, pays insufficient attention to the blessing and power of prayer! Over the span of my 80 plus years I have been very involved with two churches, both of which started with a very small group of dedicated praying people, who have rejoiced to see remarkable growth — spiritually and numerically.

From one of the churches, which started as a small Sunday School in the 1920s and was held in a room over the general store where my father was manager, there are now three well attended churches. From the other handful of people involved in starting our Coquitlam Presbyterian Church we now have a congregation of over 300 members and adherents. We are presently involved in purchasing adjacent property in order to expand the present building and increase the parking area.

In both churches priority was placed on people praying individually, corporately, and regularly. It became evident that a praying congregation leads to a confidence in the whole word of God and the importance of faith and obedience. There followed a deep caring for those in the church family and a desire to reach others outside the church. Bible Study groups grew in number and effectiveness. Children's ministries developed and missionary outreach became important. The guidance of the Holy Spirit was

evident in the sermons and the truth of the Word brought changed lives.

There is a temptation for congregations to fall into the trap of imitating the practices of the secular world in efforts to promote church growth. In doing so they may easily lose their "first love" and cease to be what God intended them to be (Rev. 2:4, 5).

Olive M. McBay  
Port Coquitlam, B.C.

## Giving to PWS&D creates less stress

Regarding the last paragraph of David Harris' November editorial: "people on your list who already have everything they need...would be thrilled if you made a donation on their behalf to PWS&D." What a brilliant suggestion! The idea prompted me to call my sister with whom I normally exchange Christmas gifts. However, I simplified it a bit, and suggested that she make her donation to a charity of her choice in her own church (she is Anglican), and I will make mine to PWS&D in my church. We are both happy knowing the gifts are so worthwhile...as well as...no stress...no gift-wrapping...no delivering... and, you are right, additional income tax deductions.

An added thought — doing it this way...less work for the envelope secretary of each church in the preparation of receipts.

Thanks again for your great suggestion.

Anonymous  
Dartmouth, N.S.

## Must we dictate entry requirements?

I read the Moderator's November article, Ecumenism — A Canadian Product, with pleasure and pride in my country. I have the good fortune to live in an ecumenical community. I concur that Canada's gift to the world is acceptance, collaboration and mutual up-building. The CBC's *Greatest Canadian* contest recently reminded us of prime minister Pearson's role in that respect. Canada is definitely at the forefront in professing and acting upon Jesus' second great commandment.

I have only one concern. The article repeatedly refers to Roman Catholic, Protestant and Christian. It is very difficult today to ignore the fact that we are living in a global society. In this society, there are many people who do not profess the Christian faith. A very strong view within the church is that only those who are willing to become members of Jesus Christ's church are acceptable. This belief could easily lead to war. I am reminded, however, of St. Paul, who discovered that the gentiles could become members of the church without becoming Jewish. Two thousand years later can the church as a whole consider accepting and collaborating with people of other faiths? When the temple is rebuilt, are we really going to have the nerve to dictate entry requirements? Has it ever occurred to us that we might be wrong?

Shirley Weeks  
Warkworth, Ont.

## Pontius' Puddle



I CAN'T DECIDE IF I'M A CONSERVATIVE WHO BELIEVES GOD WANTS US TO WORK FOR WORLD PEACE, OR A LIBERAL WHO ALSO AGREES THAT SOCIETY NEEDS A MORAL FOUNDATION BASED ON FAITH!

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR IS IN!

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### Brian Stewart zings a new song

Brian Stewart's message, *Christians Are On The Front Lines Everywhere*, is one of the finest, most soul-stirring I have read in many a day. Coming from a press source, so often refractory of the Christian faith, it truly zings a new song unto the Lord and lifts our hesitant hearts.

For his salutary manifesto, our Presbyterian Church should accord Mr. Stewart an honorary D.D. degree. He truly puts the Canadian media on a much needed higher plane. As for us in the church, or claiming to belong to it, far too few of us in the pews will stir our hearts and minds to read or heed what Mr. Stewart has to say.

*Arthur E. Gregg  
Penticton, B.C.*

### Peter come back

It was with disappointment when I could not find Peter Plymley's column in the September and October issue. I wondered what had happened to him. Then I read the announcement of his retirement in the November *Record*.

Come back Peter, come back. We need your humour in the midst of all the serious stuff that the *Record* is mainly of. We all need laughter, at least I do, it brightens my day. If not, Peter, I thank you so much.

*Leda Archer  
Elmvale, Ont.*

### Church needs strategic plans and marketing

As a long term elder at Graceview Presbyterian, Etobicoke, I have been concerned with the shrinkage in membership of our national church. The *Record* over the past year has not only provided information on the decline but has reported success stories such as Oro Community Presbyterian in the Orillia area, Grace Calgary, and Central Vancouver, to name a few.

My business experience and views may be a bit skewed as I worked in manufacturing where perfect competition existed and survival created a sense of urgency almost on a daily basis. I have not seen that sense of urgency within my presbytery or the national church. It

could be a communication problem. We do have faith and resources but unless strong direction comes from the national church our future is dim.

After manufacturing I went into financial services as a corporate planner, working with management to develop corporate objectives and negotiating regional and divisional objectives to be included in annual business plans and monitored monthly. The purpose of all this was to survive.

This is where I feel like John the Baptist in the wilderness — alone and frustrated but with hope and faith. I realize that church and business leaders have different training and skills, particularly in marketing.

Can we not be more aggressive and demanding of our church leaders in changing our culture and ways of communicating the urgency? Can we not use our financial resources, which are substantial, to send professional consultants or envoys to each congregation helping or facilitating courses of action based in part on our success stories?

*Bob Dobson  
Etobicoke Ont.*

### View World Vision as a partner

Why do the letter writers protesting your paid advertising for World Vision not see such agencies as partners rather than competitors? How much does the church denominational identity of the givers and deliverers of relief matter to the recipients? Are we motivated to give to world relief and development by compassion for those in need or denominational pride?

Are we an ecumenical and inclusive church as is commonly claimed or back in the era of denominational bigotry? If these letters reflect the mindset of the members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is it any wonder that our numbers are in sharp decline?

*Wallace Whyte,  
Scarborough, Ont.*

### From the People and Places editor:

People and Places is a unique look into the life of our church. Poring over its pages one could learn much about Canadian Presbyterians. For example, it



seems we love cake, since the majority of photos are of a cake. One could also learn that we love to stand and smile, since that is what we do in all the photographs. One might surmise we aren't action people — doing something, running, jumping, making, playing — but that would be wrong, of course. One might also wonder if we are enormously proud of our church basements since we see so many of them.

Each submission for this section is a brief glimpse into the larger story of the church. The local church and the national church. We try not to reject any submission we receive because we understand how important these stories are to the participants. A life of service to Christ through a local Presbyterian church is a miracle and deserves a large banner poster. All we can offer is a small black and white photo.

The one thing that dogs this section is the quality of the photographs we receive. With the advent of digital cameras the quality has, if anything, declined.

Though the images might look great in the camera, or on the computer screen, or on a 5x7 photograph from the local photo finisher, they don't always translate well to the page.

It is a pity, when sharing a celebration, to not be able to see faces. Shrunk in black and white to a 3x2 image, faces fade, look fuzzy, or are lost in detail. This is particularly true of group pictures, where faces appear as dots in the magazine. In the ideal universe all photos we receive would be very high quality JPEGs, scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi. Or if from a digital camera, taken at the highest resolution available. If the camera offers 1000 pictures per disc or 10 pictures per disc, the photographer should choose the latter option.

Also, whenever possible, the photo should be of a single person, taken as tightly as possible — not head and shoulder necessarily, but close-up. If in the viewfinder the photographer sees plenty of the church basement's handsome background, particularly the heating

pipes, she should move in to have the subject fill more of the frame.

I noted the cakes above. It seems often as if the photographer is more interested in the cake than in the subject. There may be good reason for this. We all love a nice piece of cake after a Sunday service, but the urge should be resisted.

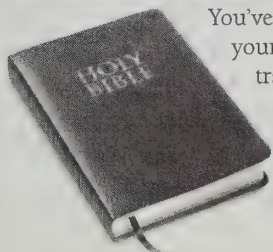
P&P, as we call it here at the magazine offices, is a wonderful record of our church. It is a celebration of our lives together. It is one section of the magazine wholly dependent upon readers' submissions. There are dozens of anniversaries, milestones and achievements within our family every week. Through P&P we share our joy, our pride, and sometimes our sadness. And, we share best when we have clarity of vision.

*P&P Editor*

**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**



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## New clerk of finance

The finance department at 50 Wynford Drive is pleased to welcome Margaret Bucknole as the new senior clerk,



accounts receivable. Born in Fraserborough, Scotland, she emigrated to Canada with her parents, Mary and Bill Noble, in the 1950's. Margaret lives in Pickering with her husband Chris and their three sons David, Andrew and Matthew. They are members at St. Andrew's, Ajax, Ont.

## Give 'em that ol' time religion

An evangelical Nigerian preacher believes he has the ultimate counter-terrorism tool and wants the United Nations to take heed. "The secret of a successful battle against terrorism lies in sending Christian missionaries into the Middle East. It is only the Christian Gospel that can bring down hatred," Dr. Panya Baba stressed at a meeting organized by the Evangelical Church of West Africa. "The United Nations should ask member nations to contribute to mission work. Missionaries are doing better in bringing peace into the world.

"Peace can only come through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, and not through presidents of the world. We should know that there is no president that gives the world peace. Jesus is the only source of peace, he is the government as stated by the prophet Isaiah," said Baba.

*Obed Minchakpu, ENI*

## 80 years of Glad Tidings

Glad Tidings, the bimonthly magazine of the Women's Missionary Society, is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2005. The magazine is sent across the country and around the world to places such as Nigeria, Central America, India and Ghana.

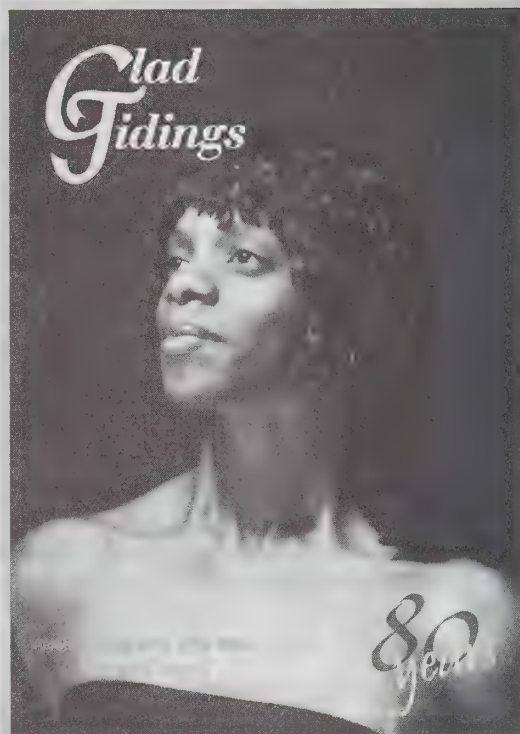
Launched in the summer of 1925, The Glad Tidings was run by Miss Mamie Fraser, who edited the Missionary Messenger newsletter before its reincarnation into a magazine. The publication started with a circulation of 10,000 and cost 35 cents for an annual subscription. Its purpose was to spread mission information at a minimum cost.

"Originally, it was a tool for the Women's Missionary Society to communicate with one another," says Holly Wilson, who became the 11th editor of this venerable magazine last May, taking over from June Stevenson. "The mandate now is to inform, educate and inspire people to action in relation to mission and social justice issues."

Wilson, who is also working towards a biblical studies certificate, hopes to provide more stories for youth in the magazine,

while continuing the tradition of inspirational stories, news items, mission articles and poetry for her readers. "The history of this magazine is so important. The women are so amazing and they had such dedication and love for their work," says Wilson. "I just hope to keep my ears and my heart open to what God would like for this publication."

*Amy Cameron*



## Sentimental artifacts stolen from Alberta church

Forbes Presbyterian, Grande Prairie, Alta., was robbed five times last summer, with a vast array of items stolen. There have been no leads and nothing has been returned.

On May 29, an engraved wine server and an old, glass-topped travel communion set went missing. A new computer, television, VCR, toolbox, and numerous potted plants have also been taken. A large brass cross, given to the church in memory of a long-time member, was stolen in September. "This has had a profound affect on the congregation," said Rev. George Malcolm. "They feel violated — just as people do when their home is broken into."

## Arson threats to PCUSA condemned

The Presbyterian Church USA has come under fire for what some are calling "anti-Israel and anti-Jewish" attitudes. A letter addressed to PCUSA promised violence against Presbyterian churches, saying "they will go up in flames." The letter set a Nov. 15 deadline for the Church to reverse its Middle East policies. No attacks have been reported.

The letter is in response to a decision made at the Church's General Assembly last summer to selectively divest in businesses contributing to or supporting the conflict in the West Bank and Gaza. Fourteen members of United States Congress have condemned the decision, saying in their own letter that it penalizes Israel "for acting in its own defence" and is "irresponsible, counterproductive and morally bankrupt."

Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of PCUSA, said the fault lies with Congress, as it has failed to negotiate peace in the region. Statements rebuking the conflict have been directed at Palestinians, wrote Dr. Kirkpatrick in his response, with Israel being all but encouraged to violate international law.

Several Jewish groups, although they don't agree with PCUSA's stance on the issue, have expressed their disapproval of the arson threats. "Threats of violence against any houses of worship are intolerable," said Kenneth Bandler of the American Jewish Committee. The Union for Reform Judaism and the Simon Wiesenthal Center have also condemned the terrorist threats.

ENI

## Africans call on western churches to repent

Africa's Anglican bishops have ended their first continent-wide gathering by reiterating what they said was their "biblical position" in the controversy within the worldwide Anglican communion about homosexuality.

"God created us male and female and we cannot sacrifice truth for any revisionist agenda which leans on a faulty understanding of Christian unity," the bishops said in a statement after a six-day gathering in Nigeria's capital, Lagos.

The bishops met a week after the release of the Windsor Report, written by an Anglican commission seeking to find a way of preventing a schism over the issue of homosexuality in the 78-million-strong Anglican communion.

In their statement, the Anglican bishops said, "We note with approval that the Windsor Report calls for a moratorium on the ordination, election and consecration of any candidate to the Episcopate who is living in a same gender union, and the blessing of same sex unions."

The report criticized the US and Canadian churches and urged them to apologize to other believers within the Anglican communion who they had offended by their actions.

African Anglican primates had earlier said that failure by the US and Canadian churches to adopt "a genuine change of heart and mind" would indicate that they "follow another religion."

In a published statement the primates said "We believe the report correctly points out that the Episcopal Church USA and the [Canadian] Diocese of New Westminster have pushed the Anglican communion to the breaking point."

Obed Minchakpu, ENI

## Divided Presbyterians reunite

A 32-year-old rivalry between presbyteries in Taiwan has finally ended in reconciliation. Over 10,000 members of the Kaohsiung and Longevity Mountain Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan gathered for reconciliation. Members from the presbyteries' 138 congregations met at National Kaohsiung University for a worship service. PCT General Secretary William J.K. Lo preached the sermon. The two presbyteries were the result of a split in 1972 over issues of polity. Twenty-four churches left the Kaohsiung Presbytery for the newly formed Longevity Mountain. ENI



Some former, retired and current PCC missionaries to Taiwan met at a cottage in Bracebridge, Ont., last summer for fellowship. Back row, from left to right, Terry Samuel, Paul McLean, Murray Garvin. Center row, Marilyn Ellis, Mary Beth McLean, Joy Randall, Wilma Welsh, Diane (Petrie) Osborn, Mary Helen Garvin. Front row, Louise Gamble, Betty Geddes, Jack Geddes, Grace McGill, Marie Wilson.



# AIDS demands action, says moderator

by Amy MacLachlan

**M**oderator Rick Fee is passionate about ending the AIDS crisis. The situation is worsened by the moralistic approach taken by some countries and the churches stuck with the disease. Fee never hesitates to speak up about this deadly approach. "The classic approach of churches has been to follow the letters of the alphabet, where A is for abstinence, B is for be faithful, and C is for condoms," he said. "But the next letter is D, and with this disease, that is known as death."

Fee lived and worked in Nigeria for 16 years. The African nation struggles with government woes, religious fighting, and widespread poverty, but it is their growing HIV/AIDS problem that worries him most. Newly-hit countries like Nigeria are tackling the problem as many countries did 10 years ago, preaching against the use of condoms. Churches that have already been down this road now admit to adding to the spread of the disease.

In Malawi, where the Presbyterian Church has a strong presence, clergy are conducting one funeral per day due to AIDS-related deaths. AIDS patients occupy 80% of that country's hospital beds. Health care personnel and teachers are dying at a rate faster than can be replaced. Fee said overseas partners are feeling increased pressure to help countries cope.

In a response to the crisis, Fee has made the epidemic the focus for his year as moderator. The Towards a World Without AIDS campaign is a national initiative led by Presbyterian World Service and Development, of which Fee is director.



**Knox Presbyterian Church in Waterloo, Ontario has committed to raising \$25,000 over the next three years for Towards A World Without AIDS campaign. The congregation staged its second annual fashion show on Nov. 6, raising \$1470 for the fund. Pictured in some of the featured fashions are, left to right, Elsie Baird, Grace Ibrahima, Patty Jackson and Sue Simpson.**

"We can only pray that our Christian response to HIV/AIDS in all of its ramifications will bring out the very best in human compassion and care," he said.

Fee said he hopes the campaign will become a two-year project, due to the

**AIDS obliterates the workforce needed to plant and harvest food and sustain the country, and leaves millions of orphans in its wake**

long-term need for support. "It's not like a hurricane, where you can go in, clean up, and start over."

So far, Fee has been encouraged by the response from congregations and presbyteries — \$83,000 was raised by November. Commissioners and youth representatives at the 2004 General Assembly, where the campaign was

launched, gave \$6,000 of that. The goal for the year was set at \$500,000. The campaign will help support the church's partners in Africa, Asia and Central America as they deal with the effects of AIDS.

Despite the relatively modest givings, everywhere the moderator goes, people ask him about the project. "It's captured the imagination of the people," he said. Many congregations will be devoting their Christmas Eve offering to the campaign. Youth at New St. James, London, are chopping, bagging and selling firewood to raise money, and the congregation will kick-off a Lenten series on

Feb. 6 that focuses on the project. The series will feature guest speakers, fellowship lunches, evening programs, and a presbytery-wide musical service.

The disease leaves millions of orphans in its wake. It also obliterates a workforce needed to plant fields, harvest food, and sustain the country, creates stigma and discrimination towards those living with the disease, and interrupts development efforts as resources are redirected to deal with the health crisis.

To address these challenges, the campaign focuses on prevention, advocacy and practical responses. The campaign website (see below) is a useful resource for people looking to get involved. It contains fundraising ideas, stories of people experiencing the crisis, worship resources, facts and statistics, and examples of how the money is used.

Visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/aworldwithoutaids/index.html](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/aworldwithoutaids/index.html) for more information. **[E]**

## Child poverty stats scandalous, says moderator

Child poverty is “a real scandal” says Moderator Richard Fee of the federal government’s failure to fulfill a 15-year-old promise.

Nov. 24 marked the day in 1989 when all parties in the House of Commons agreed to end the financial despair many children in Canada face. The goal was to wipe out such poverty by the year 2000. That more than one million children still live an impoverished life is unacceptable to Fee. “On the 15th anniversary, when our elected representatives pledged to work for the poor in Canada and that has not been met, is what truly defines a scandal.”

One in six children in Canada lives in poverty, according to the 2004 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada. A lack of low-cost housing, a low minimum wage, and no subsidized daycare (except in Quebec), continue to keep many parents and their children below the poverty line. However, there are talks of giving childcare cost breaks to

families making less than \$75,000.

Canada’s churches have been responding to the crisis for years. Evangel Hall, a downtown Toronto ministry that provides food, shelter, group activities and spiritual nurturing to the inner city community, is a Presbyterian-supported initiative created in 1913. Many individual congregations have an Out of the Cold program, providing warm meals and a place to sleep, or operate their own in-church food banks that serve their surrounding communities. Many members are actively involved in building projects through programs like Habitat for Humanity, and in raising money to support such endeavours. Urging the government to make changes is another important way for Canadians to address the problem.

“Individual congregations are most definitely involved in addressing the issue on a day-by-day basis, on the front lines,” said Fee. “Congregations contribute so much, and the government

should implement policies that would allow churches to be more effective.”

The anti-child-poverty coalition Campaign 2000 is determined to see the government implement policies to help end the crisis. Raising the Child Tax Benefit (a monthly, tax-free payment made to eligible families, which may or may not be bolstered by the National Child Benefit Supplement given to low-income families) is one initiative they’re lobbying for. Affordable housing and community services are other concerns. The coalition argues that with Canada’s federal surpluses, the government can afford to do more.

Because of this, those involved in the cause are hopeful that change will occur. “The government has the fiscal capacity to do it,” said Harry J. Kits, executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, a national faith-based, public policy organization, “so we encourage Canadians and the government to help us ensure we meet this goal.”

*Amy MacLachlan*

## Presbyterian and Anglican churches victims of arson

Two churches in Thorold, Ont., sustained extensive fire damage within one week of each other in November. Fire officials and police have deemed the fires at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian and St. John’s Anglican “suspicious”. No one was injured.

During an evening concert on Nov. 14, the audience at St. Andrew’s noticed the stained glass windows were flooded with light. Rushing outside, parishioners saw the garage — housed directly between the church and the manse — engulfed in flames. Rev. Douglas Robinson’s car was completely destroyed, and two others were damaged beyond repair. Several windows in the church were

broken by the heat. There was between \$75,000 and \$100,000 in damages. Officials continue to investigate.

Six days later, Robinson again heard fire trucks at about 6 a.m. They were

rushing to St. John’s — a block away from the Presbyterian church. Fire had engulfed the church hall, kitchen and offices, both upstairs and down. The church suffered some smoke damage.

Historical church documents in the 151-year-old building were saved.

St. Andrew’s has opened its doors to the Anglican congregation. Sunday morning services have been shifted to accommodate the neighbouring congregation, and office space has been set aside for their use. Mr. Robinson said the Anglican church should be fit to conduct services in one to two months, but their hall and offices may not be ready for another year.



A garage and cars were damaged in a fire at St. Andrew’s, Thorold, Ont.



## Construction of striking new church building begins

The construction of an eye-popping new building for the Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Toronto has begun.

At the groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 10, 2004, Rev. Will Ingram moderator of West Toronto presbytery, and presbytery clerk Rev. Joe Williams, were present. Completion of the chapel in the state-of-the-art building is expected by Oct. 2005.

The congregation will then be able to move their services to the new building. Completion of the rest of the structure will continue around them.

"God has been so good to us," said Rev. Enoch Pobee. "We've had our ups and downs, but God has stabilized us. People are understanding what God can do in one's life, irrespective of where one finds oneself... We're shooting forward and we hope the completion of the chapel will boost the congregation both in membership and commitment."

The congregation marked its 10th anniversary on Dec. 12. Moderator Richard Fee was the guest preacher. Mr. Pobee said the anniversary was a time to remember God's goodness and presence amongst them.

*Amy MacLachlan*



## St. Thomas church blessed with centenarians

*by Linda Todd, member of Knox, St. Thomas*

Like any other church, Knox, St. Thomas, Ont., values all its members and adherents. Age or tenure matter not — we simply enjoy having everyone with us each week. However, at the beginning of last summer, it came to our attention in rather short order that we had two very remarkable women in our midst.

Two of our members were both over 100 years of age. Now, I admit that I don't have any data on the odds of something like that happening but it seems quite extraordinary to me. We have been blessed to have these two gracious ladies with us for an incredible length of time.

Marguerite Young was born on Dec. 11, 1902 in South Yarmouth Township near St. Thomas, Ontario. A farm girl,



**Marguerite Young**



**Clara Underhill**

she had three younger brothers and certainly seems to have enjoyed her formative years. Marguerite married J. Gowan Young in 1931 and they had two children, James Gowan and Claire (Dunan) Young. Marguerite is blessed with two grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Marguerite and her husband joined Knox Church in 1938 and she remains

active in several of the groups in the church such as the Presbyterian Women and the WMS. She's a truly amazing lady and rarely misses the Sunday morning service. Clara Underhill was born on July 3, 1903 in South Woodslee. She and her husband Otie were married in 1923 and settled down to farming. Together, they raised their daughter Barbara (Blewett) and celebrated 72 years of wedded bliss.

Clara was an enthusiastic supporter of the church, particularly enjoying the music program. Her motto was always to "work hard to accomplish your dreams" and she did just that. Sadly, Clara passed away this past November and is deeply missed by her family and her many friends whose lives she touched.



## Small church, big anniversary

Ormsby Presbyterian Church, known affectionately as "the little church on the rock," celebrated its 100th anniversary on August 15 in Ormsby, Ont. Former Presbyterian Church in Canada moderator Rev. Arthur Currie was the special guest. Kevin Martin, whose great, great grandfather donated the land for the church building, preached the sermon.

His father, Garry, spoke about the church's history, and his family's involvement over the years.

The "small church with a big welcome" was true to its reputation as 150 people packed the red brick building to capacity; forcing the overflow to take seats on the front lawn. Howard Baer played the organ, accompanied by The Old Hastings Brass. Margaret Hughes and Lillian Oakley Pattison sang duets.

Along with her husband, Gary, the Pattisons recently bought the church building — which sat unused for many years — to be used for weddings, quiet meditation and community events. Gary Pattison's great, great, great grandfather, James, settled near Ormsby after leaving Scotland in 1855. There has been a Pattison presence in the area ever since.

Following the service, visitors walked over to neighbouring Old Hastings Gallery for a church supper.



Ormsby Presbyterian Church.

Photos: Guy Smaghe, PWS&D



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## Supreme Court supports same-sex marriage

The federal government has the right to legalize same-sex marriage, according to a unanimous ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada. The country's highest court said in its decision, "...our Constitution is a living tree which, by way of progressive interpretation, accommodates and addresses the realities of modern life."

The decision was in response to four questions from the federal government seeking to legally change the definition of marriage from a union of "one man and one woman" to "the union of two persons."

Although the ruling allows a national redefinition of marriage, the court said religious organizations are not compelled to perform same-sex marriages if they oppose such unions.

The Canada Family Action Coalition, a conservative organization in Canada, has said they will call a referendum for the next election, asking Canadians to vote on the proposed change.

The non-binding ruling, delivered Dec. 9, is considered an opinion to advise, but it paves the way for Parliament

to take the issue to a vote. Justice Minister Irwin Cotler has said he will introduce legislation this month and expects it to pass quickly.

The appeals court in Ontario was the first to rule in favour of same-sex marriage in June 2003. Since then British Columbia, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and the Yukon have made similar court decisions recognizing same-sex marriages. The provinces based their decisions on the guarantee of equality in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Belgium and the Netherlands also allow same-sex marriages.

Three of the government's questions were answered affirmatively by the court's nine judges. The fourth question, whether the traditional definition of marriage between a man and a woman is constitutional, was left unanswered. The court exercised its discretion, saying a "yes" to this question would throw the other rulings "into confusion", and would "undermine the government's stated goal of achieving uniformity in respect to civil marriage across Canada."

*Amy MacLachlan*

## Native healing centre discussed at assembly council

A proposal for a Native healing centre was presented to assembly council in November. The proposal was among 14 others drafted by the healing and reconciliation design team.

Several recommendations were carried and will make their way to General Assembly in June. Others were defeated or sent back to the design team for further study. These will return to the table at the next council meeting in April.

Team convener Lew Ford described the healing centre as a place where Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, youth and adult, can come together for healing, fellowship, friendship, retreats and summer camps, and where people can be

trained to provide support to congregations working towards healing and reconciliation. The centre would operate out of northwestern Ontario, Manitoba or Saskatchewan, where the PCC's residential schools were run.

Rev. Ian Morrison, general secretary of the Life and Mission agency, said the report could dominate "the work of the PCC for the next 10 years." In 2003, General Assembly directed that work should begin "on planning an appropriate program on healing and reconciliation" with Aboriginal peoples, as part of the church's commitment to assisting in the recovery of those affected by residential schools.

*Amy MacLachlan*



## Salvadoran street minister says God hates religiosity

God wants "love, compassion and justice," said Baptist minister Ramon Ramirez. A native of El Salvador, Ramirez has devoted his life to ministering on the streets. He said God did not call the church to a "false religiosity" of



empty liturgy, sacrifice, and ignoring the commandments, but a rich faith based on caring for the poor and fighting for social justice. Saying God hates religion, he pointed to the books of Amos, Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Micah and Isaiah to stress this belief. "It is a very dangerous thing when one reaches a comfort level and strays from God's commandments," he said during an interview at church offices, speaking through Rev. Jim Patterson, a Presbyterian missionary and friend.

During his visit to Toronto in Nov., Ramirez visited the Presbyterian Church's national offices. He thanked the church for its partnership and commitment to mission work. Moderator Richard Fee presented Ramirez with a plaque for his dedication to justice and human rights. In a sermon given at church offices, Ramirez said although nearly all six million Salvadorans are religious, political corruption, lying and deceit, fighting and crime are commonplace.

Ramirez visited prisons and schools, addressed students at Knox College and preached several sermons in Ontario churches. His visit to Evangel Hall, a

downtown Toronto ministry meeting various needs of the inner city community, produced mixed feelings in him. Impressed by the work being done there, he was startled by seeing homeless white people. "It was strange for me to see white folk in that situation; in poverty," said Ramirez. "In El Salvador, we have the impression that when a white man comes to visit, he must have a lot of money," he continued, "but I have now met people who have to save up for a long time to travel. It is a message I will take back with me."

Although Ramirez is a Baptist, his work is supported by the Presbyterian Church. Patterson and his wife, Brenda have been missionaries in El Salvador since 1999. They have recently ended their term there.

He closed his sermon at church offices by admonishing his listeners to stay committed to God's work. "Keep on with the work of God that he has placed in your hands," he said. "Nothing should ever go backwards."

Amy MacLachlan

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## world news

### Storm of locusts has many interpretations

Millions of red locusts have swarmed into the Holy Land conjuring up Biblical images as they ate palm trees bare, feasted on crops and even settled on the shores of the Dead Sea.

The locust plague has swept in from North Africa where the insects devoured fields and even crossed over the pyramids. It was the worst locust plague to hit the Holy Land since 1959 and the Israeli air force said it spotted another swarm, 10 kilometres long, approaching from the Sinai Peninsula.

The Old Testament's Book of Leviticus, Chapter 11, lists locusts by name as a permitted food item, although not all locusts are kosher. Many rabbis ban eating the insects, saying the knowledge to identify which species are kosher has been lost over the centuries.

Some rabbis, however, saw the locusts as a biblical warning. "We must wake up and show more love for our fellow man. People should give more charity. Then God will defend his people from all evil," said the country's chief rabbi, Shlomo Amar. Locusts were the eighth of 10 plagues visited upon the Egyptians by God until Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go.

*Michele Green, ENI*

### Give 'em that ol' time religion, pt. 2

Asian churches need to think less about the bricks and mortar and more about spiritualizing, Dr. Ahn Jae Woong, general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, told his colleagues at a conference.

"They eventually are more concerned about managing, or rather mismanaging, their infrastructure and assets." He said churches focused their energy, time and resources on buildings and infrastructures, and increasing their membership. He said it was time to discuss and to act to recover the lost mission of Asian churches.

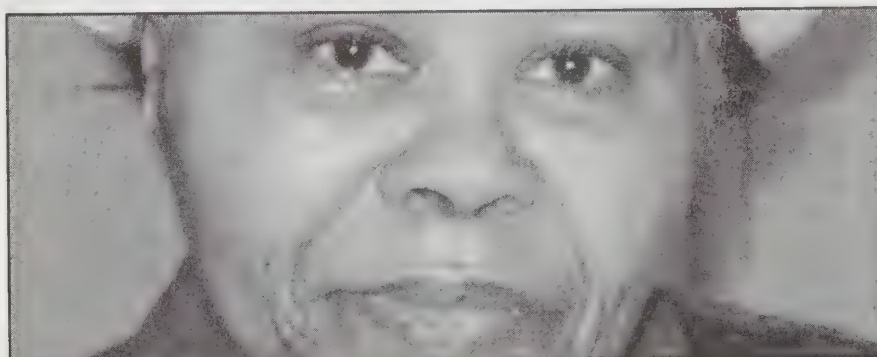
*Michael Mettason, ENI*

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# Sudan's solution: peace not relief

by Amy MacLachlan

**T**he ultimate solution to a resolution of the crisis is to have peace," said Elizabeth Majok, a mother of five from southern Sudan. As a regional representative at the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), Mrs. Majok visited Canada for two weeks in November and December to tell the story of the conflict in Sudan and the women who are working towards peace. "People want peace," she said, "but they don't know where to start."

Aid and relief agencies in Sudan, along with the NSCC are beginning to shift their focus to set the peace process in motion, and ensure peace agreements are kept. "The real solution is not relief, but peace," said Mrs. Majok. "Only then will people become dependent upon themselves."

"There has been no development of the country during the last 45 years. There is no comparison between Sudan and the 20th century. War has destroyed a lot. People have stood still. It's like the land of the Bible 4,000 years ago."

Two generations of Sudanese have lived in an almost constant state of civil war, with several successive peace agreements dishonored for various reasons.

"We're fighting for our own survival," said Mrs. Majok, of the South Sudanese people. "We have our own identity and dignity, but it's not respected. We want to rule our own destiny." Islamic Arabs in the north and Animist and Christian blacks in the south have been fighting border disputes and property rights on

and off since 1956 when the colonial British and Egyptian administration left Sudan an independent nation. The first civil war lasted till 1972; and the sides took arms again in 1983 when Shariah (traditional Islamic) law was imposed. Fighting intensified over the next decade. Four million people were displaced. Starvation and human rights abuses were rampant.

An agreement was reached in 2002 to allow the Southern Sudanese their self-determination. While those details are discussed and negotiated, via various



Elizabeth Majok talking to Canadians about her native Sudan.

Non-Governmental Agencies and at the United Nations, the death toll for the latest civil unrest rises to two million. With the help of non-Sudanese organizations there is hope this new agreement will be kept.

"The most challenging time is coming now — the time of post-conflict," said Mrs. Majok. "Two generations have been brought up in war and violence. It's a way of life...and it's a long-term process to change." Mrs. Majok said women were instrumental in pushing through Sudan's first peace agreement in 1989. A group of women at one of the meetings stood up and announced if the men didn't reach an agreement, they would no longer give birth to their children — an outrageous comment in a society where women lack an equal footing with men.

Their desperation for change is fueled by the fact that women are the main victims of war and violence. "The kind of suffering they endure is incredible," said

Mrs. Majok. "It is a heavy load — extreme poverty, illiteracy, displacement, abduction, slavery, rape."

Despite all, Mrs. Majok has faith in the process for peace. "My hope is to see the smile come back to the South Sudanese people," she said. "Now, you see children playing with sticks and they're imitating guns. That is the kind of play they have. But to see them go back to school, with clean clothes and proper supplies, and to see mothers caring for their families without worrying about what to eat. That is my hope." **R**

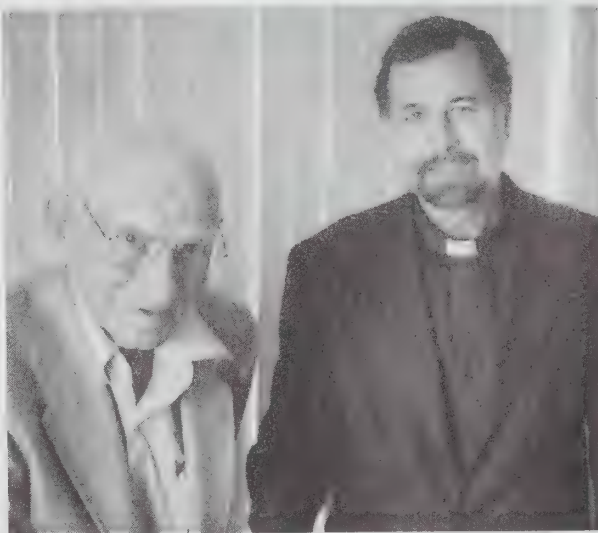


Eldership Training Seminar, St. Andrews, Belleville, Ont. Top Row: Helen Fox, Marie Merrill, Steve Ollerenshaw, Colleen Martin, Tom Conley. Bottom Row: Carol Merrill, Carol Collins, Jean Hopkins, David Cooper.



◀ Rev. Desmond McConaghy and his wife Pauline honoured by First Presbyterian Church, New Westminster, B.C., for ministry during a long vacancy period.

Mr. Art Death celebrates the 60th anniversary of being an elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Brampton, Ont. He is here joined by Rev. Wes Denyer. Mr. Death made a generous contribution to the Restoration and Renovation Fund for St. Andrew's at the same occasion.



▲ Cathy Martin, of the Mi'k Maq nation, helps St. Margaret's Bay Presbyterian Church in Tantallon, N.S., celebrate its very first Thanksgiving as a worshipping congregation on Oct. 10, 2004. It was an occasion to meditate upon 400 years of Europeans in Acadia, and the longer presence of the First Nations. In song and prayer the congregation sought to support the sanctuary and those in need in the community.

## Had cake lately?

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The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

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The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.

Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.

The Church School children at First Presbyterian, Brandon, MB, study "Partners in Malawi." Their offerings during July and August were sent to PWS&D.



▲ Guest speaker Rev. Darren May and Rev. Duncan Kennedy celebrate the 109th anniversary of St. Paul's, Winchester, Ont.

Barbara MacLeod first sat behind the organ at Grand River Presbyterian, North Sydney, N.S., in 1937. She was been a faithful presence there for 67 years. For the church's Anniversary Celebration Sunday last year, she was honoured for her service by the congregation and the session.



▲ Louise (center, seated) celebrates a birthday at David's Place, on a Friday night in the hall of Church of Saint David, Halifax, N.S. David's Place is a drop-in centre and clinic for those who spend their days and some nights on the streets. It is housed at the church, and jointly sponsored with the Victorian Order of Nurses. Louise is a regular. Seated beside her is a volunteer, Margaret. Standing, from l to r, volunteers Patricia and Melvin, nurse Mary Ann and volunteer Bernie.



▶ Youth from Calvin, Halifax, participated in the August 04 Extreme Children's Festivals. Pat Allison, Geraldine Charters and Adam Wood (back row) were the adult leaders. Teams traveled from P.E.I. to New Brunswick to Nova Scotia leading youth in worship and play under the theme Being the Best... God's Best.



◀ Emma Kerr, of St. Andrew's, Mount Forest, Ont., may be a 'shut in' and blind but that doesn't keep her from supporting various mission projects. Here she is with blankets made from squares she has knitted. The blankets will be shipped to Africa.

On Oct. 13, 2004, the Semper Fidelis Auxiliary WMS of Knox, Agincourt, Ont., celebrated their 75th anniversary. Pictured with the anniversary cake are  
▽ Violet Reid, Janet Muirhead, Joyce MacIsaac and Marjorie Shorting — all of whom are long-time members of the group.



△ Amy Sedlezky, staff writer for the Record, married Joe MacLachlan on September 4 at St. Andrew's, Brampton. Rev. Wesley Denyer officiated. Amy's byline in the magazine has changed to reflect her married name.



Peter Haddow celebrated his 100th birthday a little early with Margaret Dawson, left, Tanyss Phillips and Margaret Munro, in Sept. at St. Andrew's, Saskatoon. The group along with the congregation had lunch together after the church's annual Pastoral Care Service. Each year the church invites and provides transportation for those unable to attend regular service. Mr. Haddow, originally from Scotland, started his new century Nov. 21.



On October 31 The Presbyterian Church of Saint David, Halifax, celebrated the 135th anniversary of the dedication of their building as Grafton Street Methodist Church. Shown here in period costume with an anniversary cake and hallowe'en treats are Davida Mackay, Johanna Roberts, Mac Fyfe, Shelley MacDonald-Parsons, and Sarah Macdonald.

Miss C. Jean Phillips, of Erskine Church, Ottawa, receives a certificate of appreciation from Rev. Cedric Pettigrew for her 29 years of continuous service as Representative Elder to the Presbytery of Ottawa. She has served on several presbytery committees and the former Board of World Mission of the General Assembly.



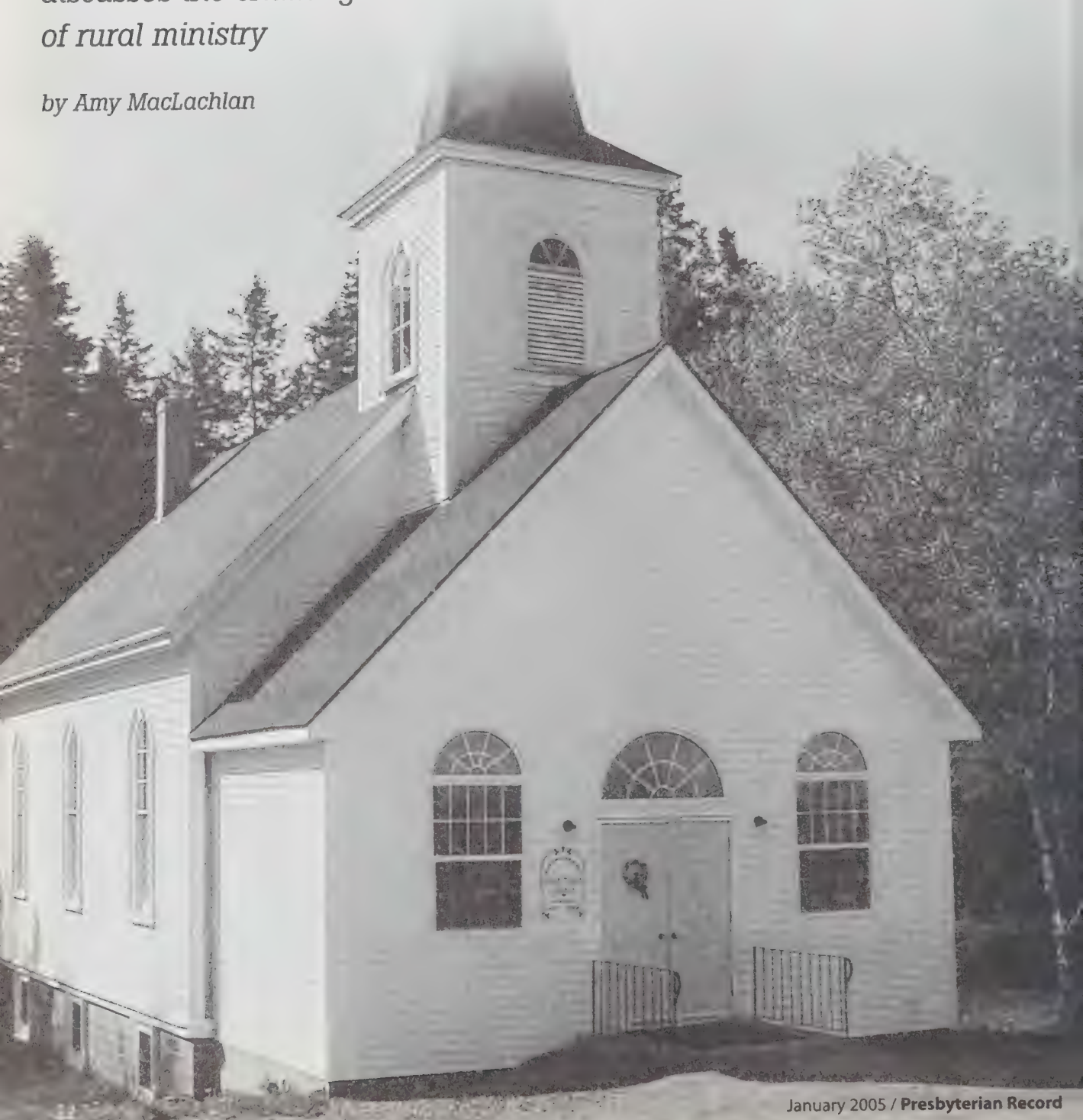
Fred Duggleby was honoured with a presentation of books and an appreciation luncheon for 23 years of faithful service as treasurer at St. Mark's, Malton, Ont. He is seen here with elders Abhijit Ghosh and Patricia Richards.



# Rural churches must reclaim God's covenant

*Seeds of Hope symposium discusses the challenges of rural ministry*

*by Amy MacLachlan*





**A**s the pace of urbanization quickens across the Canadian landscape, rural churches, like the family farm, are simply disappearing.

Cooperating, not competing, is key: "If the church can be seen as a place to come together; to talk and to seek community, to not be there to recruit, and to cooperate with other rural churches," says sociology professor William Ramp, "[the church] will draw people in and contribute to keeping that population."

Dr. Ramp was a keynote speaker at a recent rural ministry symposium, *Seeds of Hope*, that focused on some of these issues and initiatives to strengthen them. If the rural church is to regain its footing, it needs to be a beacon of Christian love and relationships — an idea that served as the main message of the ecumenical gathering held at Queen's Theological College in Kingston, Ont. in October.

Rural churches face not only declining attendance, but attracting full-time ministers, integrating urban transplants retiring to rural communities, replacing young members who have moved to the city and supporting new ministers lost in the uniqueness of rural culture.

Creating community in the face of these challenges means building bridges between urban and rural society. "Don't defend rural rights by demonizing the government and pitting rural against urban," said Dr. Ramp. "You need each other, as consumers and producers." United Farmers — a farmer-led rural organization — uses a logo of two hands clasped together. Dr. Ramp, who teaches at the University of Lethbridge, said it might be an appropriate logo for the rural church to keep in mind. It would be a fitting metaphor for creating the cooperative community that is needed.

Keynote speakers at the symposium spoke of the need for rural churches to be the life of their communities: displaying Christian values, stimulating friendships and alliances between farmers and rural landowners and fostering communication. "The church is one of very few local, rural organizations that serves its community," said Dr. Ramp. "We must celebrate that."

### **God's good gift**

Hope for revitalization lies in the rural church's ability to renew and reclaim God's spirit, by celebrating the gifts of land and water people use in their homes, on their farms, and in their churches. Rural language was often used to describe the Israelites' relationship with God. "I will plant them upon their land and they shall no more be pulled up out of the land I have given them," Amos 9:15. Throughout the Bible the land is given by God to his people to be nurtured and for their flourishing. Dr. Ramp said the land is the basis of peace and justice and is a gift to be lived in covenant. When the land was lost, it often signaled the loss of God's covenant as well.

**In 1941 there were  
730,000 farms in Canada.  
By 1996, that number had  
dropped to 280,000**

"Don't represent the rural church as a niche with special needs, but as central to the Christian life," said Dr. Ramp. "It is our God-given duty to care for our fellow human beings and for the earth.... That idea has to be regenerated at the level of the local parish."

Dr. Jill Hopkinson, rural church officer for the Church of England, said the church is responsible for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the community and can influence all three areas. "Being Christian is an opportunity to be an embodiment of faith in daily life." It is where the strength of the rural church lies. "The mainstay of community life is that people are helped when they're in need, and that's mainly performed by church people."

### **When worlds collide**

Although there has been a steady exodus from rural landscapes to urban skylines, the trend is changing in certain areas (especially southern Ontario). One

million people are expected to move to Toronto from smaller, surrounding areas in the next 20 years. But baby-boomers are retiring from city life and settling in cozy rural towns or placid lakeside cottages. According to Statistics Canada, there was a net out-migration from rural to urban areas between 1981 and 1991, but a net in-migration between 1991 and 1996. That trend seems to be continuing.

Twenty-two per cent of Canada's population lived in rural areas (defined by StatsCan as areas with a population concentration of less than 1,000 per square kilometre) in 1996. Last year, it was up to 23 per cent. Rural areas that grew were in close proximity to urban centres; more remote towns had a population drop. "The biggest issue is growth and a clash of values," said David Robinson, lead consultant for congregational development at the Anglican diocese of Toronto.

He said people who are retiring are coming from urban or suburban congregations and bringing different expectations with them. "Most often, their culture is a North American, mass media monoculture and they're moving into a traditional, rural culture with its own values." Ideas of time and space often differ. For example, congregational meetings may be scheduled last-minute on rainy days because farmers must work in the fields when it is dry. Authority also varies, with social position in the congregation based on heritage, family, experience and respect, instead of knowledge, success and individual merit important to many urban cultures. Such differences can be stressful to new ministers or to urban transplants looking to join a rural congregation. "What we need to tell rural congregations is they're in the ministry of multiculturalism," said Mr. Robinson, specifying there doesn't need to be a difference in skin colour to have a cultural divide. "The context is changing. Be aware of that, and minister to your context."

Such change can breed resentment within the rural community — keeping doors shut to newcomers. Mr. Robinson said when urban retirees move to rural areas looking for an idealized view of country life, they often don't find it. "The rural community is something you're adopted into, it's not a joining process. They let you in if they want to."

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Dr. Ramp said emerging from such negative situations requires boldness and a motivation to do more than simply cope with the changing landscape. "We can listen, encourage and support each other," said Dr. Ramp. "We have to make small choices where we can and stick to them. And always focus on signs of life."

Mr. Robinson agrees. "A major problem is comparing ourselves with others and what we don't have that they do," he said. "Don't throw away what you have. What makes you unique?" Bigger isn't always better, he added. Rural churches must support the strong and the small. Such a mindset is useful in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, since 42 per cent of its churches, or 417 congregations, are considered small with less than 50 people at worship.

### **For the love of it**

Farmers in Canada now account for a mere one percent of the voting population. As the population shrinks and competition among farmers increases, the cooperative culture of the past can be lost, said Dr. Rene Van Acker, professor of weed science and crop management at the University of Manitoba. He reminded his symposium audience of a larger purpose. "It's not the end in itself. You don't farm just to farm," he said. "Farmers are losing sight of the bigger picture."

Family farms are increasingly sold to developers or to huge corporate farms. In 1941, there were 730,000 farms in Canada. By 1996, that number had dropped to 280,000, according to Statistics Canada. As corporate farms emphasize profit, said Dr. Van Acker, smaller family farmers who love the land become an increasingly rare commodity. The average Canadian farm used to cover 50 hectares; now they encompass almost 250. New technology enabling fewer people to do more work, unsuccessful farmers trading in their tractors for reliable jobs in town, and the merging of small farms into enormous ones, are largely responsible for the change.

Farmers are experiencing a gradual loss of control of the land as grain elevators are torn down (something previously run by farmers, for farmers), chemical companies push their products to control

weeds and pests, and seed companies promote their genetically-engineered, pesticide-resistant seed and discourage the age-old practice of keeping wheat seed from a harvested crop to be used the following year. Such self-reliance is dissuaded and ridiculed by big business. New water regulations meant to ensure safe drinking water following the Walkerton crisis are putting financial burdens on already-struggling rural congregations. Such strains on the farm impact the rural church directly — both in its ministry and the needs of its congregations.

Relationships with the laity, with other churches and denominations, and with the wider community are crucial to the vitality and sustainability of the rural church. "Sustainable development requires a people-centric view," said Dr. Van Acker. Since many rural congregations rely on lay ministers, who often have multi-point charges and therefore, are not always available, other members of the laity need to be increasingly relied upon. "Empowering 'regular' Christians to act on their faith in every day life becomes very important," said Dr. Hopkinson. The life and vitality of the church — both within the congregation and without — becomes the responsibility of the congregation itself. She reminded people that cultivating community connections is part of the church's mission.

Despite struggles, the rural church isn't only about decline and hardship. Some rural communities are already forging ahead; bravely taking on new challenges. Trinity Presbyterian Church in Grenfell, Sask. is a new congregation with a building dedicated in 1994. With a mortgage of \$500,000 already paid off, the previous member of a three-point charge is striking out on its own. The move was sparked by the closure of St. Andrew's, Indian Head, one third of the charge. "That was really sad," said Rev. Catherine Dorcas, clerk of presbytery, about how she felt when the church closed. "It was like a funeral." Despite the loss, a new self-sufficient congregation (currently in the process of calling a new minister) is a positive development. "It's exciting. We have two sides of the same coin," said Ms. Dorcas. "We're a dying breed in many respects, but there's also rebirth." ■

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# A cow is calving ... Thy Kingdom come

*Ministry in rural  
Manitoba*

*by Barb Alston*



**'C**an I help?" I asked tentatively.  
I was on a pastoral call, thought perhaps a pleasant visit with some folks over tea in the house. Instead I was in the barn helping a cow give birth.

"Sure, here, hang on and pull!" was the answer given. I put my weight and strength into the pull — hands grasping the calving chain. The cow strained. We pulled, the chains wrapped around the two front feet of a calf. The head, then the shoulders, the body, the hips and back legs emerge, and whoosh — the slippery slimy little brown calf is born.

This experience was one of many that taught me as a new minister in a rural area I should first of all not be surprised at anything that could happen. And that I should carry absolutely everything that I could think of in my car: rubber boots, cover-alls, old clothes, warmer clothes, work gloves and mitts. There were many things I would have to learn about and

simply become a part of and help with. A pastoral visit came to be anything from going ice fishing, to riding in a combine, to working with cattle.

I discovered that I needed to be prepared to deal with anything in my travels as well, as ministry on the prairies means a lot of driving. I have moved hay bales and dead deer off the road. I have encountered deer, cattle, an airplane that had been spraying a field, landing just ahead and coming toward me, and a huge flock of wild turkeys crossing the road.

One evening a curling game at the local rink was interrupted by a phone call. What could be so important for someone to track me down there? Well, it was time to take on an offer I had made casually a

while ago, to check cows in the middle of the night that were due to calve. I found myself filling needles in order to vaccinate a herd of cattle. One Christmas day I remember having a peaceful meditation with a group of cows as they munched their hay. I remember having a calf named after me after dragging it on a toboggan across the snowy yard to the back porch to get warmed up. Ministry for me has often been simply doing what needs to be done — make the tea, help with the cows, rock the baby, play with the children — becoming a part of whatever is going on.

I made the trip from Ontario to South-western Manitoba, equipped with my theological education and some farming background, to serve the Hartney and Melita pastoral charge. Since then, my life and ministry have been shaped and tested. That early training with cattle has served me well. My husband Tom and I have three daughters and six grandchildren. Our farm, halfway between Hartney and Souris, is now home. We





Farmers at a farm auction sale.

have an Australian Shepherd dog who is more than a pet and helps with the cattle and with pastoral visits. We also have several cats, a herd of cows and two llamas. We enjoy visits with family. My life on the farm and life as a minister in a rural area have become interwoven.

The edges become blurred. They feed into one another. I have found that hav-

ing at least some understanding of what is going on with the farm community is an integral part of being a minister in a rural congregation. Having the discipline of sermon preparation helps me keep focused on my faith, so that I can better cope with whatever is happening.

Because we raise cattle and sell calves each year we are sometimes at one of

the local auction marts. One day the farmers were selling calves for one-half of what they did the year before. I will never forget the look on their faces — and one young farmer saying, “I just don’t know what to say.”

Attendance at farm meetings and 4-H activities double as a time to talk to farmers and their families. When things are tough on the farm, some people want to talk. I remember walking down the street one day and when I went into the hardware store, a farmer friend said simply “pray for us.” That was our only conversation that day. When farmers lose spending power, businesses in town decline. Stress within families escalates. There are many who hold jobs off the farm and relationships may suffer. Income is down; bills keep coming. Young people who want to farm wonder if they will be able to. People who want to retire keep working. Their retirement fund may have been their cattle herd, which is now seriously devalued.

### Unpredictability of farming

Farming has always been unpredictable. In my relatively short time here

## Ranchers in crisis

There is a large ranch that lies just off of Highway 24, near 100 Mile House in the interior of B.C. It’s around 500 acres of land, including 70 acres of upland fields and 80 acres of meadow. Some of the land is leased out but most is used by Pete and Nichi Bonter, owners of O’Neil Creek Ranch. They run a Hereford-Angus cross cow/calf operation. In order to make ends meet, Pete takes off-ranch jobs: firefighting, logging truck driver, excavator operator. During the summer months, Nichi works part-time. Ginny-Lou Alexander interviewed the Bonters on their ranch.

**Alexander:** A BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow disease) cow was discovered in Alberta in May 2003. How has this affected your ranch?

**Bonters:** The beef industry is export driven. In 2002, 70% of product (beef and live cattle) was exported, and of that, 76% went to the U.S. In the beef industry, supply and demand is the rule and with the American border closing calf prices dropped dramatically.

**Alexander:** Did finding a second BSE cow on December 23, 2003, have any further ramifications for you?

**Bonters:** The same things happened all over again and set the process back seven months. A lot of ranchers couldn’t see their way clear to keep going and they just filed for bankruptcy.

**Alexander:** There was widespread drought in many areas in B.C. during the past year. How has the lack of water impacted the ranchers?

**Bonters:** Due to the lack of water on the range, waterholes dried up completely, making it necessary for ranchers to haul water long distances and at high cost, out to the watering areas.

Some waterholes receded to the point of making it dangerous for animals to try to get to the water. There were many reports of ranchers pulling animals out of the mud. We had an animal get stuck in the mud. We pulled her out, got her back on her feet, and thought she was doing okay. A couple of days later, she was bloated. We dealt with the bloat but thought we should keep her where we could keep an eye on her. Not long after that, we found her lying by the barn, dead. Now we have her orphan calf to bottle feed.

**Alexander:** What other factors have made ranching difficult in the last year or two?

**Bonters:** The BSE crisis has, in and of itself, been hard to deal with. All the other complications seem like poor timing. Rising fuel costs are making it almost prohibitive to fertilize or drag equipment over fields that aren’t likely to produce much again this year. We’ve been fertilizing, but are only applying half the amount we should be.

on the prairies, I have witnessed many of the extremes — in weather and market situations.

In 1999, in the late spring, it began to rain. Jokes were made that perhaps it was time to build an ark, but soon it wasn't funny any more. It rained to the extent that many acres were not even seeded. To a farmer whose income relies on getting that seed in the ground, this was disastrous. Speaking to a friend five years later, she said they were just starting to recover from that flooding.

Sometimes during the summer, the "big white combine" comes, otherwise known as hail. Sometimes crops are totally destroyed. Two years ago, there were drought conditions in many areas. The clouds were empty. Grass-hoppers threatened to eat whatever plants were able to grow.

These conditions combined with the uncertainty in the beef industry, made for feed shortages. A lot of herds got by on rations based on feeding grain and straw rather than the traditional hay. There was constant concern as the winter progressed — would there be enough feed?

The government is bringing in new drinking water regulations, which will mean that all ground water will be regulated — more rules to live by and more dollars to be spent on permits.

**Alexander:** What control, if any, do the ranchers have over these various factors?

**Bonters:** There's almost nothing we can do except keep a positive attitude and fight depression amongst ourselves and others. We know that God is in control of the situation and of our lives. We have faith to say that even if the ranching industry fell apart completely, God isn't going to leave us lying flat. For example, we had a \$15,000 hay bill last fall. Pete got an off-farm job fighting fire and earned almost enough to pay the whole bill, plus the money we got for the calves we shipped.

**Alexander:** What would help solve the problems ranchers face?

**Bonters:** The short-term remedy would be to get our export market back. For the long term, we need to broaden our base of export. We have to learn how to deal with [the problems] on our own by finding other countries to ship to. We need to develop facilities to process other kinds of beef. At present there are no large Canadian owned and operated facilities.

**Alexander:** Describe the effects that this crisis is having on individuals, relationships, families, and communities.

**Bonters:** In 99% of farm families, women juggle the finances. This has put tremendous pressure on them, and they have felt it more

Last year will not be soon forgotten. It began dry and then on May 12 a blanket of heavy wet snow covered much of southern Manitoba. The moisture was welcomed, but it meant poor germination for crops already seeded and some seed rotted. It was very cool in the weeks following, making for a poor start to the growing season. This theme continued into the summer, meaning the crops were

## We only plant and tend and harvest

## We do not make it grow

behind normal development. Frequent rains during haying made it a challenge to get the hay up with any quality feed value. Just when a long growing season was needed, on August 19, most areas were hit with a killing frost. Then came a wet fall, and a difficult harvesting season. Some crops, like flax were not mature when the frost hit, and so were of poor quality. Some of the sunflower heads rotted before they could be harvested. Every turn in the weather had its effect on the farm.

## The many seasons

There are many different seasons on the farm. What is going on in rural communities and on the farms dictates the planning of congregational events. You have to work around the very busy times if you want anyone to actually be there. Weddings and baptisms are usually scheduled to coincide with a less busy season on the farm.

I need to be sensitive when selecting hymns and prayers. Prayers often need to be adapted for rural areas. I have realized a few times that I shouldn't have used a particular hymn. During a flood, "Little Drops of Water" is perhaps not the most helpful.

This past Thanksgiving, I realized after we had started singing it, that the hymn, "Come ye thankful people come" was inappropriate, as it talked about "all being safely gathered in" and many crops were still to be harvested at that time.

There are many stories of things that happen on the farm that can become sermon illustrations. I remember finding one of our heifers had calved. The process had taken too long and her calf was dead. My husband and I lifted the



Pete and Nichi Bonter.

than the rest of the ranching community. We've heard of some families breaking up because of the strain on relationships. We have seen hopelessness and despair written on the faces of lots of our friends and neighbours. Depression, death, suicide and abuse are all on the increase as this crisis seems to be continuing. Personally, we've had a lot of support from our family, especially our kids. One thing in our favour, however, is that the majority of ranchers are strong natured. We just pull our hat down further and sit a little deeper in the saddle.

Ginny-Lou Alexander is an ordained elder in the Cariboo Presbyterian House Church ministry.

Photo by Ginny-Lou Alexander

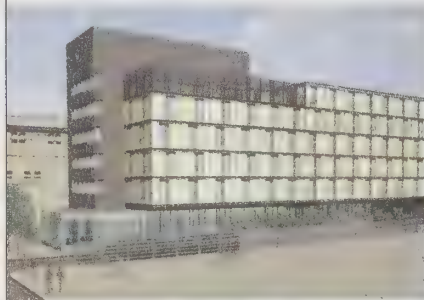




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## The Impact of BSE

### The nitty gritty:

- As of March 2004, retail beef prices dropped 20 per cent due to BSE.
- On Dec. 1, 2004, Hong Kong announced it would immediately resume trade in Canadian beef. (In 2002, Canada exported 604 tonnes, valued at more than \$2.8 million, to Hong Kong.)
- The cost of one mad cow to Canadian cattle producers is approximately \$5 billion, according to a recent Bank of Montreal report. In 2002, beef and cattle exports were worth about \$4 billion — 80 per cent of exports were to the U.S. The American ban on importing Canadian beef, however, has cost more than \$2 billion in lost exports since spring 2003.

### A show of support:

- In the wake of the BSE crisis, Canadian per capita consumption of beef rose five per cent — in 2003, each Canadian ate 14.2 kg of beef as compared to the year before when it was only 13.5 kg
- Canadians have eaten 26 per cent more home-grown beef than in 2002
- More than \$402 million in provincial and federal funds was distributed to cattle producers in Alberta in BSE compensation programs. More than 22,000 producers received payments that averaged approximately \$18,000.
- The Alberta government estimates that the BSE compensation payments "resulted in a \$1.25 billion impact on Alberta's rural economy."

dead calf into the truck to take it away. I thought about how much easier to bear a load, whether physical or the load of grief, when it is shared.

There is seeding. There are cattle to move to pasture. There are fields to be sprayed for weeds and insects. There is haying in the summer. There is the harvest of crops, like rye and wheat, seeded the fall before and then harvest of the spring-seeded crops like barley, wheat, canola, and flax. There are fertilizers to apply, and feedlots and corrals to clean. There are cattle to bring home from pasture. There are calves to wean and vaccinate. There are bales of hay and straw to get home. All through this is the marketing of the livestock and of the various grains in the bins, as well as planning for the season that immediately follows.

These are stories about people who farm or do farm related work. I write so people might learn about a wonderful, yet increasingly stressful way of life, something about a group of people across our country that need our understanding, sensitivity and prayers. It is about remembering where our food comes from and the hard work that goes into its production.

Tom likes to tell the story of the country preacher who goes to do her service at the little country church. The time

comes for the service and there is just one man there. She talks to him about maybe canceling the service, to which he replies: "Well, if I go out to feed my cows and there is only one there, I would feed her." So the minister goes through the whole service, hymns, prayers, sermon and all. At the end of the service, the farmer is appreciative, but says: "Well, you know, if I went out to feed the cows and only one was there, certainly I would feed her but then again, I wouldn't dump the whole load!"

Well, I have not dumped the whole load — there is much more that could be said on this topic of farming and ministry. It is now time for the final hymn and prayer:

*O God our help in ages past  
Our hope for years to come  
Help each one who works the land  
And calls a farm their home  
Give them strength to do the work  
That must be done each day  
And serenity to accept the things  
That we cannot change  
Help us to be thankful for  
The miracle of growth and rain  
And sun and seeds and animals  
And harvesting of grain.  
We only plant and tend and harvest  
We do not make to grow.  
And so we bow before you  
In faith and hope and love. R*



# Reader questionnaire

Dear Reader:

Once again we are conducting a readership survey to find out how well we are serving you. What follows is a brief questionnaire about what you read in the *Record* and some additional data that tells us something about you. This material is held in strict confidence and processed by a company on behalf of the *Record*. The records are anonymous and are handled within guidelines set out by the Professional Marketing Research Society of Canada.

In addition, this year, there is a tear-off section at the bottom of this page. If you are willing to be part of an in-depth marketing survey we plan to conduct, please fill in the appropriate information. This will be removed by a third party before the questionnaire is sent for processing. **Your name will not be seen by Presbyterian Record or Presbyterian Church in Canada staff.**

Please take a few minutes to fill this in and return it promptly in an envelope addressed to:  
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2. How much time do you usually spend looking at and reading an issue of this magazine?

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1-2 hours \_\_\_\_ More than 2 hours \_\_\_\_

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No others \_\_\_\_ One other person \_\_\_\_ Two other people \_\_\_\_ Three or more other people \_\_\_\_

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3. Please indicate the highest level of schooling you achieved:

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4. What is your current age?

under 18 \_\_\_\_ 18-24 \_\_\_\_ 25-34 \_\_\_\_ 35-49 \_\_\_\_ 50-64 \_\_\_\_ 65-75 \_\_\_\_ 76+ \_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate which of the following categories best describes your current working status (if more than one applies, please indicate)

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Less than \$25,000 \_\_\_\_ \$25,000 to \$49,000 \_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$75,000 \_\_\_\_  
\$75,000 to \$100,000 \_\_\_\_ More than \$100,000 \_\_\_\_

7. Please indicate the first three digits of your postal code (e.g., M3C) \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_

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**Thank you for taking the time to fill in our survey.**

**Watch future issues of the *Presbyterian Record* to see how your information helped us improve.**

# The secular left blames the Christian right

*The public square should be a place for heated but civil debate*

by Michael Coren

**I**t really is extraordinary how little most media people know about the Christian faith and its adherents. The period since the election in the United States has been a disgrace for journalism. Especially for Canadian journalism. Especially for liberal Canadian journalism. Unable to tolerate losing in the game of democracy, left-leaning pundits decided to blame the participants. Welcome to the hellish world of The Christian Right.

I've never seen such flummery and nonsense in all my life, and you should be concerned even if you have little time for Christians whom you consider to be too conservative. A toxin of ignorance and bitterness suddenly flowed into the media bloodstream and poisoned the body politic. The very nature of free speech and political expression was challenged.

Why? Because the Democrats and their friends in Canada lost. They had to find a scapegoat because they couldn't come to terms with their own failures. Just as with minorities of old, the best type of scapegoat is someone you don't really know but really know you're supposed to hate.

One rather glib Canadian pundit opined, "Half of the United States wants to be like Canada, the other half like Iran." How awfully clever. Yes that's right, 150 million Americans want to amputate limbs as a form of punishment and sponsor international terrorism.

But in Canada this is accepted as intelligent analysis. It is what we have come to expect from the influential minority group known as The Secular Left. They dominate political parties, are well organized and are vehemently intolerant. They are also incapable of listening to the inherent contradictions in their own arguments.

It needn't be that way. The public square should be a place for civil if heated debate. No voice need be marginalized and no viewpoint silenced as being extreme or unacceptable. The reality, however, is fundamentally different.

The Secular Left may advocate, for example, gay marriage, abortion on demand, the removal of prayer from schools, more state intervention in the family, lowering the age of consent and full access to pornography on television.

## **No voice need be marginalized and no viewpoint silenced as being unacceptable**

The Christian Right may advocate, for example, no gay marriage, no abortion on demand, prayer in schools, less state intervention in the family, raising the age of consent and limited access to pornography on television.

I have views on all these issues but I do not see one as extreme and one as moderate or one as intelligent and one as stupid. It is surely acceptable, indeed laudable, to have differing views on such vital topics in a thriving democracy.

What we have been told in the last month, though, is that the people who hold one of these sets of opinions are righteous and the others are fascists who want to stone people to death for watching *The Simpsons*.

Let me tell you about some members of the alleged Christian Right. The following are real but I have altered their names. The Van Pelts have six children. Their fifth child is a Downs Syndrome boy, Timmy. "You never quite stop

grieving for the normal child you lost, even though he never existed", says Jean Van Pelt. "But the love is overwhelming. It's like being drowned in love."

The Van Pelts are not wealthy but their sixth child is adopted. He is black. And, like Timmy, he is also Downs Syndrome. "He needed us more than other children", says Jean. "If we're not here to help, there's no point." The Van Pelts voted for Bush.

The Burmans lead their church mission to the inner city. They never discuss Jesus unless asked, but they do work with alcoholics, drug addicts and the abused. Both Dean and Cindy Burman have been physically attacked during their work but they wouldn't abandon their friends for anything: They both voted for Bush.

Rick Kelly is a widower. His wife died five years ago and since then he has raised their four children alone. The tears are less common now but they never completely stop. Rick's church has raised millions of dollars to help fight AIDS in Africa and also supports an AIDS hospice in the United States. Rick voted for Bush.

The Christian Right. Some are saints, some are the contrary. They can be intolerant and annoying. Just like, in fact, The Secular Left. But we all have a right and a responsibility to have an influence over our political system. How outrageous that the smug and powerful encourage one group but despise the other. Thing is, Jean, Dean, Cindy and Rick will forgive them. Perhaps it's this that makes them so very angry. **R**

---

Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# Celebrate Black History Month



Knox College is delighted to welcome The Rev. Collin Cowan as the Johnson Scholar-in-Residence for February in celebration of Black History in the worldwide church and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Mr. Cowan is minister at Meadowbrook United Church in Kingston, Jamaica and the Moderator of the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Both locally and internationally, he works for economic justice and challenges all that undermines the possibility for people to live in dignity as God's beloved children.

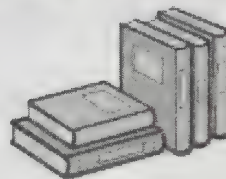
Throughout February at Knox, he will meet with students and clergy and be available for conversation and discussion forums. Look for upcoming details.

For more information contact Emily Rodgers  
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# Listening for God

by Allen Macartney

A photograph of a wooden canoe on a calm river, with a forested hill in the background. The canoe is in the foreground, pointing towards the center of the frame. The water is still, reflecting the sky and the surrounding forest. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees on a hillside under a cloudy sky.

In the pre-dawn serenity, I unzipped the tent flap and stepped out. With temperatures bracketing the freezing mark, this early morning chill was refreshing. The sky was still a deep, velvety indigo. The sun had just begun to paint a crimson trace on the distant horizon. A delicate mist hung over quietly moving, crystalline waters of the Yukon River. Gently bobbing in the current, a family of loons glided by, fishing in the water.

I breathed the cool, clear northern air.



High overhead distant stars were beginning to fade as traces of morning glow appeared above the trees. Standing there, I perfectly understood the Biblical truth: "The heavens declare the glory of God..." Miles from the throbbing pulse of civilization, I was with my Great Father. Alone on this pebbly beach, except for two sleeping companions, I was able to worship my Lord and Master in a joyful, care free way that would have been all but impossible a week before.

Like many people, my life is often one big race with the clock. Little by little the concerns and rush of this world sweep us along. Somewhere, as the current takes us, we lose the childlike ability to enjoy many things in God's creation. In this goal-oriented, headlong rush to cram just one extra project into the day, an appreciation of our Maker can fade like the last colours of sunset.

Perhaps we miss the chance to worship the Lord for that tiny Twinflower glistening in the morning dew. It doesn't happen quickly; but slowly we realize that the glitter has gone from our Christian experience. It has been happening for months.

In our hyper society, many people feel guilty if they aren't "accomplishing" or "achieving" something — even during vacations or playtime. (I feel this false guilt often.) To enjoy tennis is no longer enough; to win is really what's important. The Bible teaches a far different approach from that which our society demands. In Ecclesiastes 3:1,7 we read:

"For everything there is a season,  
And a time for every matter  
under heaven...  
A time to keep silent,  
And a time to speak."

There's a time for you and me to rest. That's why the Lord made a day of rest once a week. As an act of love to us, He didn't just ask for a day of rest, He ordered it. God wants us to have "down" time so we can recharge our internal batteries; so we can reconnect with those around us; so we can regain healthy perspectives on life; and more important, so we can reconnect with Him regularly. Rest is healthy. It's nourishing for both body and soul.

Once in a while, I try to leave all schedules, deadlines and goals behind. It is a time to re-acquaint myself with

nature, and I must confess, frequently with God. I have spent hours alone in a canoe paddling in a swamp quietly watching for ducks and beavers. I have been bombarded with threatening swoops by angry Kingfishers intent on keeping me away from their nests. Sometimes I have to shout, "Father, how great thou art!" Our God is magnificently creative!

Recapture the beauty of wildflowers. Get down on your hands and knees to explore the detail of colours from God's paintbrush. Listen for the soft rustle of the northern lights. It's there. Intentionally walk slowly. Try it — it's tough! Try not to accomplish anything once in a while. As you cast off the speed of life, you'll probably find a heightened awareness of the natural beauty God has surrounded us with. You'll also probably find that you once more want to read the Bible. Praise God. We'll all hear His gentle voice clearly whisper, "Be still, and know that I am God." **R**

Allen Macartney is the managing editor of *Ottawa Outdoor* magazine. He is also a writer and photographer.



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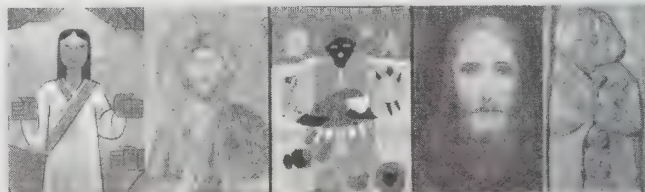
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# 'Moral Issues' = Christian Right agenda

*Conservative author huffs and puffs without mentioning Christ*

by Andrew Faiz

There was a lot of chatter after the American election in November about faith and Christianity. One news report, used in part by the *Record* in the December issue, said, "concern about moral values ...propelled President George W. Bush" to the White House. The report went on: "Rev. Rob Schenck, a board member of the Evangelical Church Alliance, said: 'This election demonstrates that Democratic Party leaders have moved far away from the moral consensus in America. If they are to reclaim political relevancy, they will need to re-examine their positions on all the major moral issues including the sanctity of human life, the sanctity of marriage and the public acknowledgement of God.'"

The statement is bold and certain: Half of all voting Americans, i.e. the ones who chose the Democratic Party, have lost their moral touch. That phrase — "moral issues" — has been ubiquitous since the election. Endless media reports have echoed this Christian Right aphorism without question. But, what is 'moral issues'? As indicated by Shenk's list above, it is about sex and religion. You have to follow the language carefully. "Sanctity of human life" = anti-abortion. "Sanctity of marriage" = anti-homosexual. "Public acknowledgement of God" = anti-ecumenical, anti-multifaith world. (You know, the good times before those non-Christian immigrants ruined everything.)

Stem cell research is on the list of moral values, along with capital punishment. But there is a lot missing from the list. The Christian Right does not consider equitable commercial and business practices issues of morality. Enron is not a moral issue. Cleansing the world of poverty, disease, hunger and suffering are not considered moral issues. Christ's

edict to feed the poor, clothe the homeless, or even to suffer children are not considered as important as Paul's utterance against gays. 'Moral issues' is a very particular ideological statement, which speaks to a very limited list of political concerns. It is a statement in support of a conservative agenda. In the hands of the Christian Right, this agenda comes with bible verses.

## The conservative Christian's 'biblical' proof is spurious at best, manipulative at worst

Searching for this proof I came upon *The Politics of Faith — Essays On The Morality Of Key Current Affairs*, by Peter C. Glover. The author is an American, a Presbyterian and a Conservative. This book is a defense of the death penalty, of the physical punishment of children, of the invasion of Iraq, of the right to bear arms and much else. Plus, he has biblical proof of his arguments. So eager am I to be educated scripturally, I picked up the book immediately.

Glover moves quickly to the death penalty: "The Ten Commandments are written specifically as laws to govern the beliefs and actions of every one of us as individuals... The sixth commandment legislates against the individual taking of human life... It cannot be extrapolated, however, to place the same injunction on the community..." In other words, it's all right for a group

— like a nation, or a society — to kill an individual in cold blood, but not for another individual.

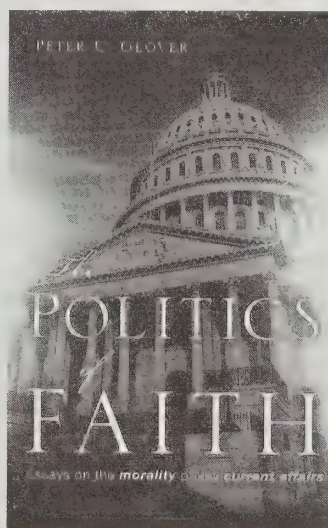
And the Beatitudes? "Far from removing the social injunction to obey the moral law of God in the Ten Commandments, and all that flows from them, Christ reaffirms this divine instruction. Neither in his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, nor anywhere else, does Jesus deny or seek to affect society's attitude towards upholding the sanctity of life, and thereby, the right to enforce the death penalty..."

That is the American conservative Christian's 'biblical' defence of the death penalty. The scriptural proof is spurious at best, manipulative at worst.

The rest of the book, echoing its conservative beliefs, is similar in tone, arbitrarily using the Bible or circumventing it as necessary. My favourite part — because this sort of popular Christianity always amuses me — is the chapter on disciplining children. Glover huffs and puffs the passages from Proverbs but never once does he whisper Christ's rewriting of Old Testament law.

It might just have slipped his mind, of course. Or, more accurately, Christ proved an embarrassment to his ultra-conservative preening. I suppose, in accordance with the author's ideology, that's not really a 'major moral issue'. **R**

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway Community Church in Toronto. You can contact Andrew at [afaiz@presbyterian.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterian.ca)



# Presbytery has history of helping others

*The presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew*

by Amy MacLachlan

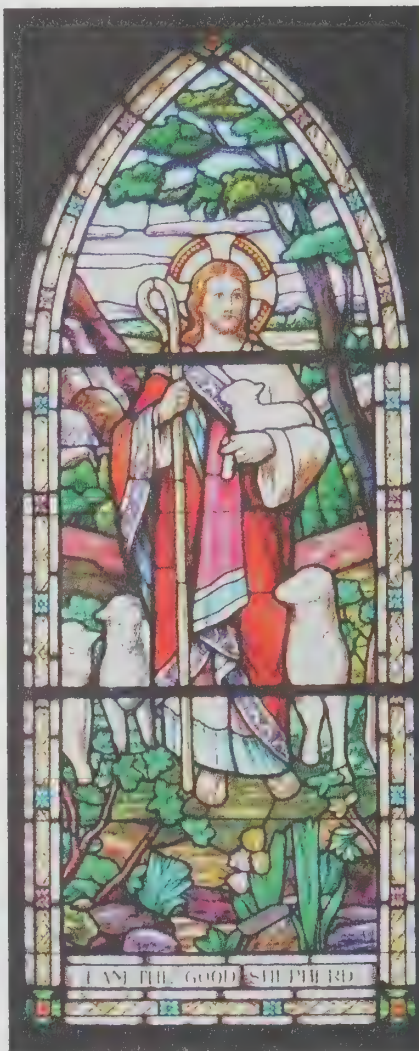
While the HIV/AIDS pandemic is ravaging parts of the world, the folks in the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew are doing what they can to help. "There is a sense of closeness and caring," said Rev. Milton Fraser, St. Andrew's, Arnprior. "In terms of the relationship within the congregations and within the community, there is a genuine concern for each other."

Some congregations have taken it upon themselves to act — like Knox, Westport, where retired minister Bruce Cossar inspired his parishioners to give to the cause. His small parish of about 65 people gave \$1,047. Prior to that, a presbytery-wide event in September benefited the campaign. A music festival, featuring choirs, a quartet and a youth band raised nearly \$750.

"We looked for a project to support, and we decided on the AIDS campaign, but originally, it was an opportunity for fellowship," said Mr. Fraser. "We want more opportunities to celebrate the good things!"

The presbytery encompasses the Ottawa Valley and outlying areas, and several small towns in Quebec. Six winters ago, the Ontario counties of Lanark and Renfrew were buried under an ice storm. The local communities rose to the challenge, assisting each other in any way they could. That spirit lingers on.

The Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew, composed mainly of rural townships and bedroom towns for those commuting to Ottawa, is not unlike the Presbyterian church as a whole. Meeting the changes and challenges of the future with open arms, while remaining comfortable and relevant to existing members is a common concern. "A lot of the congregations in the presbytery are rural and



The Good Shepherd window at First Presbyterian, Pembroke, Ont.

some are questioning how long they can continue in the way they are now," said Mr. Fraser. He said the presbytery started looking at this issue about a year ago, and is still contemplating various models for future ministries, including sharing ministers. "And that's hard for some congregations to deal with."

St. Andrew's, Arnprior and Lochwinnoch, although not formally linked, share a ministerial relationship that began when Arnprior's long-serving (and now retired) minister, Leo Hughes, was appointed interim moderator of the small church. Rather than searching for a supply minister, Mr. Hughes simply served there himself. When Mr. Fraser took over the Arnprior post five years ago, he inherited the commitment. "It has been a really neat relationship," said Mr. Fraser. "Lochwinnoch is a very rural church and Arnprior is a small town church. They're very different kinds of ministry, but it's a good partnership."

Another challenge for the presbytery is learning to cooperate with the eight retired ministers living within its communities. Mr. Fraser's predecessor served in Arnprior for 31 years and didn't relocate upon retirement. However, things have turned out well. "It has been a positive working relationship," said Mr. Fraser. "It's helpful to have him there. The church had lots of years with him, and he knows them well."

Still, the situation can be challenging for other congregations. "The presbytery is trying to work through it, because it's not always positive," said Mr. Fraser, "but we recognize that retired ministers still have gifts to offer and some of them still want to be involved."

## Looking back

The Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew was created in 1877, within the bounds of the synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario. However, Presbyterians in the area can be traced back as early as 1816, when settlers in Perth, who were already meeting informally to share their faith, wrote to Edinburgh, Scotland, ask-

Photo by George Barron



ing for a minister of their own. The following year, Rev. William Bell was sent to do the job. Two years later, First Presbyterian Church (now St. Andrew's) in Perth was born. It was the first Presbyterian congregation established away from the waterfront in Upper Canada.

During that time, First church served as monitor of moral conduct, as well as judge and jury. Those found guilty of infractions such as illegitimate births, fornication, or drunkenness were refused access to the Lord's Table until their

## The 4,000 pipes of Westminster's refurbished organ were heard nationally on the CBC

penalty was up. The congregation's somewhat archaic history was tempered by their forward-thinking in 1975, when the issue of term service for elders (a method currently gaining in popularity, where elders ordained for life can serve on session for a limited time) was discussed and approved.

The history of the presbytery is dotted with stories of services held in homes, one-room schoolhouses, barns and inns, and of ministers from neighbouring towns hitching a ride on an open rail car to preach to those with no minister of their own. It is also marked by the generosity of congregations helping each other build new churches and rebuild after fires, sharing ministers with less-wealthy parishes, and coming to the rescue of congregations struggling to pay the mortgage during the Great Depression.

Honouring those who died in war is an important matter for the presbytery. Bristol Memorial in Shawville, Que., was built to commemorate the area's fallen soldiers. The congregation has its very own war hero in Rev. (Lt.-Col.) John Foote. Minister at Bristol in 1934, he was awarded the Victoria Cross for his heroic actions at Dieppe.

A hero of another sort has his roots in a different small town. Almonte, with a population of 4,400 that has changed little over 100 years, houses Almonte Church, born of loyal Presbyterians left with no church home after the 1925 Union. James Naismith, an ordained minister and Presbyterian of the 1800s,

resided in the area. A museum and hall of fame in Almonte honours his contribution as the inventor of basketball.

Presbyterians first settled in Pembroke in 1828, and in 1850, Rev. Andrew Melville — a successor of John Knox — was called to the area. In 1928, the building of First Church, Pembroke, began. Included in its cornerstone is a copy of the *Presbyterian Record*.

Westminster, Smith Falls, established in 1829, was the first Presbyterian church in Canada to be designed with a chancel, lending itself to the church's great acoustics. Westminster's war memorial pipe organ is one of the largest in eastern Ontario. When the organ was refurbished in 1985, the sound of 4,000 pipes was broadcast nationally on CBC radio.

The presbytery's colourful history has hopes of being added to in the future. For despite difficulties, the opportunity for growth is present. Arnprior, situated on the edge of the amalgamated city of Ottawa, is expected to grow in the next 10 years. "The challenge is to be ready for the growth," said Mr. Fraser, "to be a welcoming church community, and to provide programs that meet their needs." R

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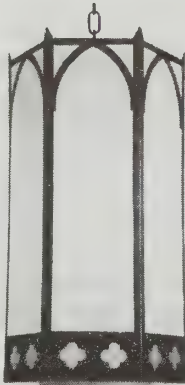
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# Baking better bread

*Elders learn how to glorify God*

by Roberta Clare

**‘W**hat makes your ‘call’ as a ruling elder or clergy different from a job in the secular market place or a volunteer position in a social agency?” The question opened a workshop led by the Elders’ Institute, a program of St. Andrew’s Hall in Vancouver, in the Maritimes last October.

After a long pause, a man sitting in one of the front pews folded his arms tightly across his chest, grimaced and barked, “I don’t like your question. If what we have just said about a ‘call’ is true,” he explained, “then there shouldn’t be any difference.” The workshop leader assured the ruling elder that his comments would warm the heart of the great 16th century Reformer John Calvin. When asked by a baker how he could glorify God in his ‘calling’ as a baker, Calvin replied, “Bake good bread.”

Perhaps it was the particular flavour of salty Maritime Presbyterianism that piqued the question that evening. But, according to the staff of The Elders’ Institute, ruling elders across the country are asking similar questions. The open honesty and urgency of the baker’s question echoes across the centuries as Canadian ruling elders struggle to fortify a church that is no longer staving off the dramatic social and demographic changes of the early 21st century.

There is not a single Elders’ Institute online course, ‘On the-Road’ workshop or printed ‘In a Box’ resource that doesn’t address the baker’s question, “How do I serve Christ as I bake my daily bread?” Rarely is the question framed, “How do we save our church?” The revitalization of our denomination will greatly depend on how we answer the former. The reformation of our doc-



**Vicki Homes (left), Katherine Schaefer and other elders from Summerside Presbyterian Church in PEI at an ‘On the Road’ event.**

trine and church structures will take its lead from the answers we give.

Now in its fourth year, the St. Andrew’s Hall Institute for Elders’ Education was commended by the 129th General Assembly to all sessions and presbyteries. In the Flames Initiative, Year of Education for Clergy and Laity, the Elders’ Institute courses and workshops draw on the collective wisdom of the elders (both ruling and teaching) before us to address the challenges (some painful, others joyful) that confront us in our shared lay and ordained ministries to the church and the world today.

How do we accompany others on their faith journeys? Where do we find specific tools to serve others in the church in pastoral care, Christian education, worship leadership, spiritual meetings, and administration? How do we live out what we believe in the decisions and actions of our everyday lives? These are the baker’s questions.

“I have been a representative elder [to Presbytery] for 29 years and was ordained in 1973,” says Jean Phillips, who attended last spring’s Elders’ Institute workshop in Ottawa, “and I am still learning new ways to respond to God’s call to serve as an elder.”

Elders’ Institute instructors are both teachers and learners. Together with course and workshop participants, they test new ideas, evaluate different models of “church,” and make lifelong education a reality. It is this kind of joint endeavour of clergy and laity, teacher and participants that seek to invigorate the church. In this way the Elders’ Institute is uniquely contributing to the Flames focus on education.

According to a recent poll of ruling elders across the country, The Elders’ Institute found that the concerns of ruling elders closely mirror those named by ministers. Their concerns are the following (not listed in order of importance):

Photo by Roberta Clare

- Burn-out by experienced ruling elders
- Unexpected “drop out” of new and younger ruling elders. (Our theology and polity have recently begun to address this problem by introducing “term service” for elders.)
- Confusion about the *Book of Forms*, its theological underpinnings, practice and practical wisdom
- Discouragement expressed by ruling elders who feel over-worked attending to the maintenance of “brick and mortar,” rather than the spiritual health of their faith communities
- Declining church attendance and few tools offered to counter it
- Little recognition
- Little or no spiritual renewal
- Few tools to attract youth and young families and keep them
- Resistance to change
- Shifting demographics and few models to integrate new multicultural expressions of Presbyterianism by new Canadians
- Few skills to meet the wide range of roles and responsibilities as outlined in the *Book of Forms*.

The recipe for baking “good bread” may not be easy to follow, but the yeast is rising in the stories of ruling elders. Marlene Phillips, a lay minister in the Maritimes, has completed several Elders’ Institute online courses and attended two ‘On the Road’ workshops in Saint John, N.B. She reported on the usefulness of her new tools in her ministry. “Last Sunday evening I had occasion to visit one of our elders who had just received [some bad news]. I could have waited and visited them at the funeral home, but I remembered that Elders’ Institute course and said, ‘I can do this.’ I made an apple crisp, (after all, isn’t that what all Presbyterians do, take food?) I went along to their home and spent an enjoyable hour with them. Other members of their family had been there during the day, but when I arrived, they were alone. I was able to practice my ‘listening’ skills which I had developed in the EI online course.”

The baker’s question to Calvin is also echoed in the immediacy of the requests for Elders’ Institute programs. At last spring’s ‘On the Road’ workshop in Ottawa, one ruling elder asked the facilitator,

## Upcoming Online Courses

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- Practical Presbyterian Polity (a course for entire Sessions): Fall 2005. Cost: \$500/Church Session

Technical support is always available.

## In a Box Resources

Small booklets designed for personal or group study, ideal for a retreat or workshop with your congregation. The cost includes permission to make enough copies for your group.

- How to Make a Pastoral Visit, by Susan Swanney, Elder at Calvin, Abbotsford, BC. Cost: \$25
- Caring for the Congregation in the 21st Century (focusing on elders’ districts) by John F.K. Dowds, Minister at Dayspring, Edmonton. Cost: \$25
- Discerning a Call to the Eldership, by Peter Bush, Teaching Elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont. Cost: \$25
- The Role of the Elder, by Erin Crisfield, former Director of the Elders’ Institute. Cost: No charge. Please note: This course is available as a free download or by email only from the Elders’ Institute web-site at <http://www.standrews.edu/elders/inabox>.

## On the Road

The EI staff travel across the country to provide custom workshops and retreats for your congregation in its local context.

- National Elders’ Conference: Caring for Today’s Congregation on June 4, 2005 (before General Assembly) at Dayspring, Edmonton. Cost: \$65 before May 1st and \$75 after. This event is co-sponsored with the Life & Mission Agency. Watch your mail for details.

For more information on these resources and others, check out [www.eldersinstitute.com](http://www.eldersinstitute.com) or phone the Elders’ Institute office toll-free at 1-866-794-8888. You can also email the office at [info@eldersinstitute.com](mailto:info@eldersinstitute.com).

tator, “I’ve just been ordained; I need to know the one-two-three’s of how to make my first pastoral visit right away. Can you help?”

Although Elders’ Institute courses are designed to meet the needs of ruling elders, lay leaders and any others in the pew, an increasing number of clergy have attended workshops and enrolled in the six-week courses, most notably Sabrina Caldwell’s *Teach Us to Pray: The Practice of Prayer for Presbyterian Elders*.

Recently, writers and designers of Elders’ Institute online courses developed a two-part course for lay leaders and ruling elders who had taken primary responsibility for leadership in their churches in the absence of permanent ordained ministers. The success designing courses to address the self-identified needs of Presbyterians has made courses like these a permanent fixture in the ministry of the Elders’ Institute at St. Andrew’s Hall.

Of course, more traditional ‘In a Box’ print resources designed for individual or group study are still in demand. Barbara McLean’s *Building Circles of Trust: Wise and Effective Sessions, Boards and Committees* will be published in February, and

*The Role of the Elder* has been translated by The Rev. In-Kee Kim into Korean and will be available in the early spring.

Custom-designed ‘On the Road’ workshops are created to address the particular concerns of Sessions or congregations and these are also available. The Elders’ Institute is often asked to consult, find resources and brainstorm new and effective ways to “bake better bread.”

“My greatest hope as a ruling elder in the church today is to learn and to follow God’s plan for my life and pass on to others the skills to do His work,” said Susan Swanney, who teaches pastoral care skills out of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Abbotsford, B.C. and developed the Elders’ Institute ‘In a Box’ resource “*How to Make a Pastoral Visit*.” Susan Swanney and ruling elders like her across the country are determined to carry on the heritage of Calvin’s baker. **R**

Roberta Clare is director of St. Andrew’s Hall Institute for Elders’ Education.

Check the Year of Education website at [www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education](http://www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education) for updates of ideas, resources and events.



# TV or not TV

**T**he football playoffs are on, but I don't know the scores. Two weeks ago, you see, we unplugged our television.

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Rachael had just come home from a friend's house. "What did you do?" I asked her.

"Watched movies," she replied.

"What kind of movies?"

"James Bond movies."

When my wife peeled me off the ceiling, we carved a new rule in stone: no movies until you phone home. Then I went over to visit her friend's dad. And put fiberglass insulation in his pajamas.

Two weeks ago I sat down with the boys to watch a harmless football game. For the 350th time, one of them had hidden the remote control. Before I could locate it, an ad for the latest horror movie had robbed them of three night's sleep. I stood to my feet, pushed the power button and calmly proclaimed: "Let's blow up the television. Let's blow it up real good." At first the children seemed rather excited. After all, they were not used to this kind of violence off the set. But when I confessed that I didn't have any dynamite and was merely going to unplug the tube, they weren't so sure.

"I can't live without it," said Jeffrey, who likes to watch.

"I'll just die," said Stephen, clutching his chest and slumping to the carpet.

"Tell you what," I said, thinking quickly, "I'll give you something really special if we can go without TV or videos for two weeks."

"TWO WEEKS?" said Stephen.

"Will you give us a million dollars?" said Jeffrey the Dreamer. "I wanna be a millionaire."

"Yaright," I answered. "Tell you what. I'll double your allowance for a month. You'll be able to buy more candy and rot your teeth quicker. Then we'll have a big party in two weeks. Give you toothpaste."

| Who     | What they gave up...  | What they replaced it with...  |
|---------|---|--|
| Phil    | Watching football, basketball, hockey, curling, lawn darts, and ping pong | Playing sports with kids, talking with wife, writing about not watching TV |
| Ramona  | Religious TV  | Radio, music, reading, friends   |
| Stephen | Cartoons  | Reading, hitting brother, saying sorry to brother, reading to brother      |
| Rachael | Cartoons  | Drawing cartoons   |
| Jeffrey | Cartoons  | Playing with Lego, thinking about cartoons                                 |

"What kind of party?" asked Jeffrey.

"I know," said Stephen, standing to his feet. "A VIDEO party!"

Rachael came into the room, clutching the dog tightly. "I don't think I'll make it," she said.

I understand how they feel. I went without television once. For 19 years. When I was a kid, we didn't have the thing in our home. On my eleventh birthday I asked my mother if she could give me one good reason we didn't. She came up with four. I believe they were in this order:

1. We are broke.
2. TV talks too much, but doesn't say enough.
3. TV takes our minds off our minds.
4. You will learn more watching a lima bean grow than watching television.

"Television is the bland leading the bland," echoed my father from the couch. "I find it very educational. When it's on I go into the other room and read a book. As for me and my family, we will go without it."

So we went to our friends' houses and watched their sets.

In Grade Nine, on a rainy evening, as darkness began to cast its mantle on our small town, I sat in a friend's living room and watched both hours of *Jaws*, a film in which Steven Spielberg coaxes the entire cast to don swimming suits and become shark bait. During the dark walk home I decided not to enter a lake or a swimming pool that summer. And if I had to take a shower, I would at all times keep one eye on the drain.

It's been two weeks since we unplugged. In a few minutes we will pull pizza from the oven and celebrate two weeks without TV. Then I will remind the kids of the last 14 days. Days best summarized with the chart on this page.

During the past two weeks, I've seen some changes in my kids. And I've seen some changes in me. To be honest, I've missed the sports, but for the most part, not watching television has freed up time for better things. Things like wrestling with the kids. Reading good books together. And loving my wife. I've also had time to do some meditating on verses like: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right...it won't get high ratings on primetime" (Phil's reversed version). And I've even had time to print off a little computerized certificate for the top of my television:

"I will walk in my house with a blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing" (Ps. 101:3).

Strangely, I'm more convinced than ever that I can do all that without unplugging the TV. Or blowing it up. That I can walk before God with a blameless heart by careful attention to daily discernment. By listening to the right voices. By modeling for my children that black and white can still be found in a grey world.

Now, I'd better go. The playoffs are on and I finally found the remote control. It was in the VCR. **E**

Phil is editor of *Prairie Bible Institute's Servant* magazine, a popular speaker and author. Visit him online at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)



# Aid missions are a community event

*A small church makes a big difference*

by Graham MacDonald

“Over eighty people for the first sitting!”

“There’s a big lineup already, and cars are parked all over the place.”

People continued to pour into the Legion building in the Northern Ontario village of Sundridge, almost three hundred of them on a stormy evening in February of 2004.

The occasion? A church beef supper? A community hockey event?

No. This was a spaghetti supper fundraiser for a project in Zambia. Five people from Knox Presbyterian, Sundridge would soon be heading for Africa. Arleen and Bob Johnstone, Barry and Ryan Hubbert and Team Leader Bill Hunter were undertaking the adventure of their lives by travelling to help build phase one of a community multi-purpose building in a remote Zambian village. The proceeds from the supper would help buy building materials in Africa. The whole community had rallied to support this project.

Knox Sundridge has a long history of missionary outreach. For years the congregation accepted the annual Presbyterians Sharing allocation without prolonged discussion. In fact one member usually asked why the allocation wasn’t higher! Each year the congregation has donated to international and local charitable projects. Average Sunday attendance is about seventy persons. Then, Knox people started to make mission trips, at personal expense.

Arleen Johnstone made three short-



**Bill Hunter (left), Barry Hubbert, Arleen Johnstone, Ryan Hubbert and Bob Johnstone with some of the materials they took to Zambia last April.**

term trips to Corrymeela, Ireland, where she served as a volunteer counsellor to inner city youth, handicapped children and people in financial difficulties. It was there that she had an inspirational conversation with Mother Teresa. Later Arleen made three trips to Haiti where she assisted at an orphanage operated by the Sisters Of Charity.

Some years ago Marg and Bill Hunter moved to the Sundridge. Bill made a trip to Guatemala in 1998 and in succeeding years both of them travelled to Malawi and Nicaragua. People familiar with such

mission trips know that each person in the work party can take two hockey bags of donated school supplies, children’s clothing, etc. And that’s where Knox congregation, as well as sister churches on the Burk’s Falls Charge, St. Andrew’s, Burks Falls and Knox, Magnetawan, generously donated materials and financial assistance for the trips.

Rev. Wally and Audrey Little became part of the Knox family after Wally’s retirement from First Presbyterian, Collingwood. In 2000 Wally and Audrey led a team to Malawi where they began

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work on a girls' school. In October of 2003 they returned to Blantyre Synod, Malawi for a six-month assignment with International Ministries of the Presbyterian Church. They served as temporary replacements for Rev. Glenn and Linda Inglis, as well as assisting with a host of other duties. They distributed many school supplies donated by people from the Burks Falls Charge, Knox, Magnetown ladies crafted children's blankets, which were distributed to local orphanages. Ladies from the three churches have also become involved with Presbyterians Aiding Nicaraguans and have made hundreds of bags to be filled with gifts for young cancer patients in that country.

And Knox Sundridge is still at it.

In July 2003 teachers Rosalie and Alan Howard and their children travelled the province of Uttaranchal, India. They are serving as house dons on a two-year assignment under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. In addition, Rosalie has been assisting with French instruction in the school.

In February of this year, Marg Hunter travelled to Malawi to assist the Littles with a work project. She was accompanied by Yvonne Heaman of St. Andrew's, Parry Sound and Linda MacLennan and Sandra Beattie of Calvin, North Bay. The ladies received some assistance from Presbyterian World Service and Development.

And there's still more!

Rev. Dr. Walter Winger is part time co-minister on the Burks Falls Charge. He and his wife Lois have made several trips with Medical Ministries International. In January of this year they travelled to Jamaica as part of a team to treat people with eye problems and to distribute hundreds of pairs of eyeglasses, all without charge to the people.

Behind these mission travellers are the people in the pews of the three churches who have said, "We can help." These are the generous, hard working people who are found in any congregation. These are the good folk who open their hearts and their wallets for causes in the name of Christ.

Yes, thank God for small churches! **R**

Rev. Graham MacDonald (retired) lives in Burks Falls.



# called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

## I wonder what Epiphany means?

In traditional Christian churches, Christmas is celebrated as a period of time (called a season), instead of just one day. The Season of Christmas begins with the First Sunday of Advent and concludes with Epiphany.

January 6 is known in western Christian tradition as Epiphany. Epiphany means an appearance or a showing. Jesus was shown to the world as a King when the Magi found Him in Bethlehem. They had traveled a very long way, and so they represent the whole world looking for Jesus.

## Epiphany fun for the whole family!

### Sing 'We Three Kings.'

Discuss with your family what the song means and how the wise men may have been feeling.

### Read Matthew 2:1-12.

Unscramble the Epiphany words from the story that are scrambled below.

iagm \_\_\_\_\_

tras \_\_\_\_\_

ginks \_\_\_\_\_

ldog \_\_\_\_\_

ftsig \_\_\_\_\_

yhhm \_\_\_\_\_

Thehmeble \_\_\_\_\_

esnecniknarf \_\_\_\_\_

### Make a crown fit for a King!

Ask an adult to help you measure your head and cut a piece of cardboard to wrap around it. Then staple the back and start decorating with beads & sparkles.

### Write a family Epiphany Prayer.

Pray this epiphany prayer together to prepare your hearts and minds.

*Dear Lord, As the season of Christmas draws to a close, I thank you for the gifts you have given me. Because you revealed yourself to me at Epiphany, I will welcome you into my life and reveal my heart to you.*

*Amen*



You will find more learning  
activities online at:

[www.presbyterian.ca/  
record/wonder.html](http://www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html)



# Doing what ya otter

*Facing the epiphany that stands before us*

by David Webber

**T**here is something on the ice!" Halden said, his eyes peering across the lake. This phrase is a delightful call to binoculars in our house, something looked forward to and cherished the several times a week that it happens. Soon several pairs of binocular clad eyes were trained on the lake.

"Why it's the Fuzzy Tails," I said, "and today there are three of them."

"They're so cute," cooed Chelsea. "Look at them sliding into the open swimming hole in the newly formed winter ice."

Linda and I and our two children all gazed, enthralled at the river otter play. Their chocolate coloured, richly-furred bodies looked as slick and as luxurious as the Queen on a visit to Inuvik. Out of the blue, the largest otter stood up high on its

hind legs and turned around to look about 200 yards across the lake. It immediately dropped to all fours and began to do the "otter hop" in that direction (river otters, *Lutra canadensis*, are one of the largest members of the weasel clan and hop like all species of that family). I scanned ahead with my binoculars to see what the attraction was. Sure enough, across the lake was another opening in the ice; a new hole just begging for otter play. Soon all three river otters were doing the otter hop rapidly towards the hole.

And then, like a troupe of Keystone Kops, the lead river otter stopped, stood high and erect only to be knocked like a bowling pin by the other two charging behind him. A free-for-all erupted followed by an untangling. After this they all stood on their hind legs to look first at

the delicious hole across the lake and then cautiously all around for any signs of danger. The large river otter dropped on all fours and made about two more hops towards the new delectable hole. It stood again to look, first at the hole in the ice and then all around again for any hazard. Everyone else copied the leader's procedure. This cautious two-step advance continued for about a dozen feet and soon it deteriorated into more peering around than advancing. Finally the last otter, obviously the smallest and most cautious, turned and began to scamper back to the original swimming hole. Soon 'Caution' became the leader and the whole troop turned and hopped like mad in a retreat that ended with a corporate dive into the safety of the old familiar swimming hole.



They disappeared for a few minutes. I looked all around with my field glasses. I could see no sign of any danger from either the likes of Eagle, Coyote, human or any other such vultures. And then the otters reappeared from their hole and the whole procedure repeated itself, ending with 'Caution' leading the retreat again. It started a third time, but we had to leave. It was town day.

When we got back home six hours later, the river otters were still at their original swimming hole and I could tell from the tracks in the fresh snow that they had not advanced any further towards the hole of "milk and honey" on the other side of the lake. Caution had won the day. I had venison hanging and meat cutting to do and so I spent the remainder of the day pondering steaks, caution and a Scripture that had been bugging me all week.

Caution often seems to win my day. I am more like the river otters than I care to admit. In my walk as a Christian, I am often presented by God with opportunities I can't seem to grasp, challenges I back away from, ministries that I run away from. I am no chicken, "just doing what I otter", just being human. Many times the call of faith seems to call me beyond where I can humanly go. And if any human had reason to feel like that, it was the octogenarian Joshua as he was looking at the fortified walls of Jericho (Joshua 5.13-15).

As the old man Joshua gazed at the walls, it must have seemed obvious to him that the next divinely ordained step in his life would be the capture of the walled fortress Jericho. But there was so much reason for caution. He had received no inspiring divine message of instruction like he had before the crossing of the Jordan River. His fellow spies forty years before had reported at Kadesh Barnea that, "...the cities are large, with walls up to the sky." (Dt.1.28). To make matters worse, despite Joshua's long military experience he had never led an attack on a fortified city that was prepared for a long siege like Jericho was. And there was the matter of weaponry. Israel's army had no siege weapons; no battering rams, or catapults, or moving towers with which to attack the high walls. Their only

weapons were slings, arrows, and spears, all impotent toys against the walls of Jericho.

As I continued to slice deer steaks and ponder Joshua, I became convinced that as Joshua gazed at the walls of Jericho he must have been on the verge of "doing what he otter," letting caution lead the way and retreating. And then something caught the corner of his eye. It was a soldier brandishing a sword. Joshua instinctively challenged the stranger, saying in effect, "Who goes there, friend or foe?"

The response must have been shocking and revealing. Something occurred in the brief encounter that convinced Joshua that this stranger was no mere soldier. He fell on his face saying, in effect, "Speak,

## **God calls us to seize the day. Not cautiously. Not timidly. But enthusiastically**

for your servant is listening." The reply to Joshua was brief but urgent: "Remove your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy."

"Holy Moses, Joshua," I said as my own personal and sudden revelation nearly caused me to slice off my index finger along with a deer steak. "You just had an experience like Abraham had under the oak at Mamre, Jacob had at Peniel, Moses had at the burning bush. You just had an epiphany, a manifestation of God."

So what on earth is the purpose of an epiphany? I thought hard as I moved on from steaks to stew-meat. In the Bible an epiphany always seems to happen right about the time someone feels called of God to do what they can't or won't do. Usually the mitigating circumstance is the problem of being led by caution. God seems to know that when caution is going to lead one of His people backwards, the way forward is to go stand right before their eyes and say, I will lead you and I will never leave you. In Joshua's case, God stood right before him (and this is not an angel because angels will not allow themselves to be worshiped as in Rev.19.9-10) and said in effect, I am in

command. This epiphany was a deeply significant experience for Joshua. He had anticipated a battle between two opposing armies, Israelite and Canaanite. He had thought this was to be his war and that he was to be the Commander in Chief. But then he was confronted by the Divine as commander and learned that the battle was God's. God had shown up not as an idle spectator of the conflict nor even an ally but completely in charge. And Joshua had discovered himself as God's servant, at most second in command. Joshua was lifted from "doing what he otter", struggling to find courage in the face of the impossible challenge that was before him, to following the divine force of God into the challenge. It changed everything!

About the time I finished with the stew-meat and progressed to deer-burger it stuck me that here is the purpose of an epiphany, to discover God as divine commander, and ourselves as God's servants. For us Christians, Epiphany is more than a date on the calendar or a season of the church year. It is the realization of everything that Joshua discovered whilst cautiously gazing at the impossible walls of Jericho. When the call of faith seems to call you and I beyond where we can humanly go, God stands before our very eyes in the Christ child, in an epiphany, and speaks to each of us. He speaks in Christ and says, "I am the Commander; I have gone before you in birth, in life and in death. I will conquer all that will come your way with my resurrection power." His Word reminds us that all authority in heaven and on earth is His, that even we are His, that every New Year is His. The Commander owns the day and has called us to seize the day, not cautiously, not timidly, but enthusiastically risking everything as we follow Him and serve Him and trust Him. And the Risen Christ, the Commander, makes a promise to us, an ending of the otter way covenant with us. *I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.* (Mt.28.20) **✠**

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Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.



# Family's century-old ministerial tradition has come to an end

by David Esler

**I**t is the end of an era. J. Reynolds Esler, Minister Emeritus of First Presbyterian Church in Port Colborne, Ont., died on September 1, 2004. He was 90 years old. He was one of the few ministers to serve two different congregations for more than two decades. As the last survivor among the Esler children, Reynolds' passing ended a century of continuous ministerial service to the Presbyterian Church in Canada by the Esler family.

Three of the seven children of Princeton-educated Rev. Alexander Esler and his wife, Annie, would devote their lives to the church. Two ministers, Reynolds and McKay were raised in the Esler home, along with one deaconess, Pauline. Their direction was partially shaped at the Esler dinner table, famous among visitors for its mixture of prayer and intense conversation, and accompanied by hearty helpings.

Annie Esler — a university graduate herself, rare among women of her generation — forbade gossip at the table. Instead, religion, politics and life took centre stage, and debate and repartee filled the cozy kitchen.

The senior Esler began his ministry at the turn of the twentieth century in Cooke's Church, Toronto. A magnetic preacher, he quickly attracted a large following. In 1908, he moved his family west, accepting a call to Grace Church, Calgary. He continued west to Vancouver in 1919, serving at Robertson Church.



**J. Reynolds Esler signing the baptismal book for his first great grandchild.**

Both congregations were their cities' preeminent churches.

The eldest son, McKay (known to all as Mac), inherited his father's gregarious nature and dynamic speaking style. However, it was his quieter brother, Reynolds who first felt the call to ministry and entered Knox College in 1934. Mac soon followed.

The college was filled with brilliant minds, many of them less than dedicated to academics, and smart enough to get away with a casual approach to varsity life. Mac fit right in. And made sure his brother didn't spend all his time in the library.

Reynolds graduated from Knox in 1938 and was the last surviving member of that class.

Their sister Pauline joined her brothers in Toronto in 1937, studying at the Presbyterian Deaconess Home. She began her commitment at Knox Church, Toronto in 1939. It lasted 45 years until her retirement in 1984. She died ten years later.

Mac served at St. James, Winnipeg, Chalmers, Calgary and Vancouver Heights in a ministry that continued until he died in 1986.

Reynolds' first congregations were the joint charge of Ripley and Ashfield, Ont. He moved to Alexandra Church, Brantford in 1941, serving there for 20 years. His last call was to First Presbyterian in 1961. Over another two decades he led that congregation through growth both spiritual and capital, spearheading a major addition and renovation.

Reynolds retired in 1982 but returned to the pulpit for the baptism of his three great-grandchildren.

He successfully fought three different cancers and two heart attacks during his retirement years, attaining two milestones in 2003: his 90th birthday and the 65th anniversary of his marriage to Marion, who survives along with two sons, David and Jamie, and seven grandchildren.

While the Esler tradition of ministry has ended, the family relationship with the church continues. Marion remains a stalwart member of the Presbyterian Women at First Presbyterian (a group she founded more than forty years ago), and Jamie is an elder at Trinity Church, Kanata, Ont. **E**



**Aitcheson, Doris**, 86, longtime member and former organist and choir leader of Avonton Presbyterian Church, Avonton, ON.

**Andersen, Paul Michael**, April 17, 1935 – July 15, 2004. Paul Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark on April 17, 1935. His family emigrated to Canada in 1951 and settled in Port Stanley before moving to London, Ontario. On April 12, 1958 Paul married Shirley George in Chalmers Presbyterian Church and they raised three daughters. He is survived by Shirley, Judy, Kim, Karen, three sons-in-law and eight grandchildren. Paul was an active member of Chalmers Church, serving on several committees including the Policy and Planning Committee and the Social and Communication Committee where he took great delight in preparing meals for the congregation. Paul Andersen was ordained as an Elder of the Presbyterian Church on March 31, 1991 and served faithfully on Session until he died on July 15, 2004.

**Barr, Ruby**, 99, lifetime member of Avonton Presbyterian Church, Avonton, ON.

**Brown, Malcolm H. "Mac"**, October 10, 2004, Lifetime member of St. Andrew's, Thorold, ON. Former member of Board of Managers. Elder for 40 years.

**Campbell, William Francis**, of Saskatoon died on September 25, 2004, at age 76. Bill joined the Bank of Nova Scotia at the age of 19 and served the bank for 40 years across the Maritime provinces and in Saskatchewan. A faithful member of the church, Bill served in various capacities over his lifetime. He was active with Presbyterian young people's organizations, Presbyterian Men, Sunday Schools, church treasurer, member of boards of managers and elder in congregations in Long River (his hometown), Summerside, Charlottetown, PEI; Tatamagouche, NS; McAdam, Saint John, NB; and most recently at St. Andrew's, Saskatoon. He was active in the Canadian Bible Society, the Masonic Order and Kiwanis clubs. He is survived by his wife Ethel (Treloar) and 3 daughters, Janice, Heather (Mike Zaine) in BC and Mary Ellen (Sam Stevens) in BC, 6 grandchildren, brother Andrew and sister Margaret (Lamont), both in PEI.

**Conkey, Agnes Mae (McLeod)**, of Ajax, ON, died on November 12, 2004. Agnes had her schooling in Kenora, ON. Answering the call to what we now call the Diaconal Ministry she enrolled in the Missionary and Deaconess Training School in Toronto. During the summers she drove a Mission Van in western Canada, did the footwork for the establishment of Clairlea Park Church, Scarborough, ON, and worked in Knox Church, Sudbury, ON.

Agnes was certified to the Ministry of Deaconess in her home church in Kenora,

ON, on May 13, 1952. On November 26, 1955 she married the Rev. Frank Conkey in Riverdale Church, Toronto, where she had served diligently for three years. Sheila was born on November 1, 1957.

Agnes used her great ability, voluntarily, as a co-worker with Frank in St. Andrew's Church, Scarborough, ON; Bethel Church, Sydney, NS; and in St. Timothy's Church and St. Andrew's Church, Ajax, ON. In each charge she worked as secretary of the congregation, conducted Sunday School Teacher Training and built up the Sunday School, Explorers and CGIT. Leading in camps was a special experience. Her great love was teaching.

Agnes worked on all levels of the WMS and on the Board of World Mission and several of its' committees. She conducted Bible Study on many occasions.

As a secretary in Pickering High School for 14 years, she listened to many students' struggles and aspirations early in the morning. She was secretary for Community Care during its' first eight years and was secretary/treasurer of West Durham Red Cross Society.

Agnes was predeceased by sisters Edna and Ruth and brothers Don and Jack. She is succeeded by Frank and Sheila, sister Cathie Martin, Georgetown, ON, brother-in-law Ernie Craik, Kenora, ON, and many nephews and nieces and their children in Canada, the USA, and Northern Ireland.

On November 15 the Thanksgiving Service was conducted by her highly esteemed minister, the Rev. Dennis Cook. Long-time friends, the Rev. W.J.S. McClure and the Rev. Lynda Reid participated. The Rev. John Bingham read lessons from the Scriptures. Special daughter, Sheila, paid tribute to her mother.

Agnes was steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

**Evans, Rev Dr James Walwyn**, died peacefully in his 79th year at St. Joseph's Hospital on Saturday, November 6, 2004. Jim is remembered with love by his daughter, Elizabeth, her husband Gord Cetkovski, and his grandson, Jimmy, of Toronto; and his son, James, his wife Sandra Cameron Evans and grandson, Stewart, of Calgary. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Annabelle.

Obtaining a BA from UBC, Jim entered the Presbyterian ministry and graduated from Knox College in 1954. He served congregations at St. Giles, Prince George; St. Andrews, Nanaimo; Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie; St. Marks, Don Mills; First Church, Regina; St. Andrews, Toronto; and St. Andrews, Stratford; and as Secretary, Board of Ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Jim loved sports of all kinds but particularly baseball, football, hockey and golf. He was devoted to politics, jazz, Shakespeare and conversation.

In recent years, Jim faced many physical challenges and was deeply appreciative of those who cared for him and became his friends.

**Evans, William Arthur**, son of a founding member of Bonar Presbyterian Church, Port McNicoll, ON, and a member, elder and faithful worker of that church for many years, died on May 16, 2004, at age 71.

**Gordon, Charles V. Sr.**, 91 years old. Elder for over 55 years at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Windsor, ON. October 8, 2004.

**Ward, Earl Clifford**, passed away quietly in Creston, BC, September 11, 2004 with his family at his side, at the age of 106 and 8 months. Earl was elected an Elder of Stephen's Presbyterian Church in 1957. He later served as Clerk of Session for almost 30 years, and as Presbytery's Treasurer for a number of years. As a beloved member for over 50 years, he will be sadly missed.

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Ken Wild was inducted as the minister of  
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# The cross in interfaith dialogue

There is a challenge before us and our denomination's newly re-named Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. How can we understand, live with and appreciate people of other faiths while maintaining our Christian convictions? Is religion being manipulated to make this a more violent world, and does this cause strife between our neighbours and us? These questions lie at the core of interfaith dialogue.

My Toronto home is situated in what is called the most cosmopolitan square kilometre in the world. I come into contact with people of other faiths on a daily basis. My closest neighbours are Jewish, the dry cleaner is Muslim, and the grocer is a Hindu. I do not believe I am an ex-

ception. One of my mother's many helpful neighbours in Killam, Alberta (pop.1000), is a Muslim from Iran. I believe our church has spoken and equipped us, and will continue to equip us, to more fully enter into dialogue with our neighbours so that we can speak as disciples of Christ and convey in meaningful ways what is the unique "significance of the cross".

*Living Faith* and *Foi Vivante* were adopted as subordinate standards by our church in 1998. Section 9.2 speaks of *Our Mission and Other Faiths* in these words, "Some whom we encounter belong to other religions and already have a faith. Their lives often give evidence of devotion and reverence for life. We recognize that truth and goodness in them

are the work of God's spirit, the author of all truth. We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance implying that we are better than they. But rather, in the spirit of humility, as beggars telling others where food is to be found, we point to life in Christ." The next section states, "We witness to God in Christ as the Way,

**There is much that Christianity stands to learn from others. But, it must convey coherently the 'significance of the cross'**

the Truth, the Life, and invite others to accept from him the forgiveness of God. We are compelled to share this good news." This is where our church stands in regards to interfaith dialogue.

The 2003 General Assembly accepted a report entitled, *Reconciliation and Hope in a Multi-Faith World*, and adopted this recommendation: "That congregations be encouraged to study this report and initiate or continue activities to engage in dialogue with Muslims in their communities." In 2004, the Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations was entrusted with the responsibility to, "promote and encourage peace, respect and understanding between ourselves and those of other faiths, even on issues of significant disagreement."

As members of the Presbyterian Church it is now up to us to put wheels under this language and engage our neighbours in dialogue. This will be done in imaginative and varied ways.

Our denomination is already actively involved in interfaith dialogue through discussions with aboriginal peoples, and through the work of chaplains in the armed forces, in universities, hospital and prisons. These are supported by presbyteries and the national church



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**Rick Fee with Buddhist monks at the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok last July.**

where interaction takes place. Many of our overseas partner churches seek our counsel as they interact within cultures where they are often a minority.

Ministers have long accepted as routine the reality of inter-denominational marriage. Now, interfaith marriages are becoming more commonplace. When horrific disasters, such as the Swissair crash off Nova Scotia occur, clergy of all faiths have to cope with the dynamics of the aftermath. We live in a community called earth. I am not speaking of negotiating the fundamentals of the Christian faith. I am, however, speaking of the removal of prejudice, the development of mutual respect and instilling in the next generation a deep tolerance of our cultural and religious diversity here in Canada. I believe our church and its ministers are equipping us to proclaim the gospel in truth and in action, in season and out of season.

Interfaith dialogue has been viewed as an esoteric academic exercise. World events of the last few years have catapulted it onto center stage. With political and religious statements being scrutinized for their terrorist, defamatory or

politically insensitive nuances, better interfaith relations have become a necessity. There are many areas where people of faith can and should work together. Countering violence, local and international, is certainly foremost. People of faith can find enough common ground to support cooperative actions to make a real difference in their communities.

Gil Bailie writes in *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, "As the cultural and historical convolutions continue, Christians will have abundant reasons for entering into serious dialogue with the religions of the world. While the historical record of institutional Christianity is hardly the sordid affair its modern detractors seem to think, it is reason enough to enter the dialogue with others in a spirit of humility. In the dialogue itself, there is much that Christianity stands to learn from others; but there is one thing that it will have both to learn better itself and to convey more coherently to the world, and that is the staggering historical and anthropological 'significance of the Cross.'"

Religion has often been misused or manipulated by both perpetrators and

victims alike when, in truth, the root causes lie elsewhere. Now is the time for an honest and realistic — a "street-smart" — type of interfaith dialogue wherein true healing can come about. The violence of this age must be addressed, and all people of faith can contribute to the discussion. On this matter, we certainly have a common agenda.

## **Moderator's itinerary**

**January 16 (morning)**

Ghanian Church

**January 16 (evening)**

St. Colomba's, Montreal

**January 17**

St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, Montreal

**January 18**

Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill

**January 19**

Presbytery of Montreal meeting

**January 19**

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Annual camping supplement • Nominees for Moderator • Black history month

# PRESBYTERIAN Record

February 2005



## Africa's face

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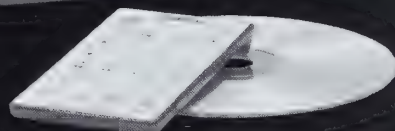
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## photo essay

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PWS&D photographer captures beauty and tragedy

by Amy MacLachlan

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by Amy MacLachlan

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### 30 Camping: Summer days

by Nancy Devine

### our cover

Carl Hiebert saw this young girl walking on a village road in Malawi while he was taking pictures for PWS&D's AIDS programs. "I was struck by the tranquility of the shot," said Hiebert, "and how she found delight in the simplicity of her own village."



Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT International



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by Rick Fee





## God in the photographic details

When natural disasters strike, such as the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean, many people wonder what role God is playing in these events. It is an age-old question and one not easily answered.

The danger is that we try to make God responsible for what we'd rather not take responsibility for and pretend we are self-sufficient in those areas where we'd like to forget that God is also involved. As the Oriental proverb says: "To raise flowers is a common thing, God alone gives them fragrance."

Blaming God for all the suffering in the world also allows us to avoid our own responsibilities. It is humans who build their homes in places that are vulnerable to natural destruction. That is rarely because of ignorance, but because safer places are more expensive. Greed and poverty often lie at the root of suffering.

As journalist Rex Murphy noted: "It is an axiom of this world that the worst things happen in the poorest places to people in the weakest circumstances. If you were born in the West, you've won the only lottery that really counts from the very first moment you take air."

That is a particularly important point to grasp. It has nothing to do with some inner virtue of ours that we live where we do. Nor is it a secret vice in the lives of those who fall on hard times that they suffer. The rain and sunshine both fall on the just and the unjust in this world. How we treat our good fortune, on the other hand, is in our control.

If we want to make God in some way responsible for the ills of the world, we also have to acknowledge the extraordinary capacity humans have been given to respond to suffering and evil. The reaction around the world to the tsunami has been truly amazing, and Canadian Presbyterians contributed more than \$345,000 to the church's own aid relief.

Yet, as many aid agency representatives have noted and worried, a similar reaction is not present for so many other even larger horrors. The genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan has already claimed more than 50,000 lives and up to one million could die if aid does not get past the nefarious regime in Khartoum. Already, more than a million people have been displaced from their homes as a result of ethnic persecution by the Arabic Janjawid.

Besides war, there is the massive upheaval and suffering in African society caused by the HIV/AIDS crisis that the rest of the world seems unable or unwilling to grasp. Is it because the problem in Sudan is one of war and AIDS involves sex? If that is the case, it would amount to a moral judgment by the ultra-rich West on the poor in the world. For that, we shall surely incur God's judgment: the prophets of the Old Testament were far more clear on the evil of economic injustice than any other transgression.

Those prophets used speech to move people to reconsider their views and to conform their actions to God's laws. If they were declaiming today, perhaps they would use television or photography to help move people.

There is no doubt that pictures on television and in print media seen over the Christmas holiday helped to spur the generosity of people around the world to the plight of those who survived this massive natural disaster.

This issue of the *Record* has six pages of deeply moving photos of Africans affected by the AIDS/HIV pandemic. They were taken by photographer Carl Hiebert for use by Presbyterian World Service and Development who generously shared them with us — and you.

About 1,300 years ago, a monk known as John of Damascus wrote: "... as words edify the ear, so also the image stimulates the eye. ... Just as words speak to the ear, so the images speak to the sight; it brings us understanding."

If John of Damascus is right in his observation, perhaps these photographs will be a vehicle of helping us to understand just a little bit better the complexities of suffering and evil and our response to them. Perhaps we may also glimpse something of the nature of God through them.

David Harris

## Presbyterians sharing with World Vision

I do not always find myself in agreement with the points made by the Editor and Publisher of the *Record*. There are however, two instances in the December issue where I find myself in full agreement with his position and his action. The first is his editorial Hospitality For Strangers Isn't Optional. The second being his action in including the World Vision material with the *Record*.

David Harris is on the leading edge with his sharp analysis in his discussion of the actions of the Minister of Immigration Ms. Judy Sgro. I think it would be useful if every Presbyterian were to read the article again, meditate upon it, let it sink in and then take the appropriate action with their Members of Parliament. If we let this issue pass without a strong Christian response, what next will be lost?

I can't understand the objection to sending the World Vision material with the *Record*. If there was no objection to accepting their advertising, I ask "what is the issue in sending out the material with the *Record*?" Is one action less ethical or less acceptable than the other? I ask, "What do you do with the World Vision material that comes to you by regular mail?" Do we read it and respond by throwing it out or giving to the cause?

One could carry this argument on to the point where we might question the advertising placed in the *Record* by Toronto School of Theology or the Canadian Mennonite University. Exposure to differing points of views and approaches

is good. The same kind of thinking should be applied to World Vision.

If the issue is that PWS&D does not have a glitzy advertising plan then that is the issue to be addressed. World Vision is a Christian based organization and it will not disappear if we do not accept their advertising. If the PCC has chosen to go low profile that is not the problem of World Vision.

The Editor of the *Record* is put in a difficult position. Let us not take off his kneecaps because we disagree with his actions. I don't find his action in any way compromising with the Devil. I hope that the board of directors fully supports his action.

Garnet Schenk  
Gravenhurst, Ont.

After reading the letters section in the December issue of the *Presbyterian Record*, I was very disappointed with the responses from Rev. Kate Ballagh-Steeper and Wilma Welsh with regards to the World Vision catalogue. Surely they are missing the point — what does it matter which organization helps people in need, as long as the people who need help receive it! World Vision also does marvelous work in countries overseas and I personally sponsor two children and know that the small amount that I give is at least helping someone and I know that it is appreciated! So let's show some Christian love here.

Irene King  
London, Ont.

I was very disappointed at the reaction, in the December issue, to the World Vision catalogue being included in a recent issue of the *Record*.

As a long time supporter of World Vision and child sponsor for more than thirty years, I for one, found the catalogue most timely and useful. This year our family had decided to make donations to charities of our choice in place of individual gifts (small children excluded, of course). The catalogue touched my heart-strings and offered me a unique and meaningful way of helping those less fortunate, as we celebrated the festive season.

There has always been enough for Presbyterians Sharing, PWS&D, and the WMS. Are we not Christians first and Presbyterians second? Does the destitute family in Africa or starving child, care whether my gifts came through World Vision or Presbyterians Sharing?

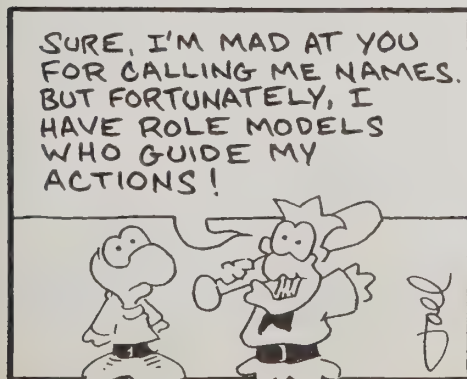
Is it possible Church membership is declining because the Church has become too self-centered and ingrown?

Evelyn Souwand  
Sarnia, Ont.

I was shocked, disappointed, stunned, angry (lots of feelings) when I read the last three letters in the December issue of the *Record* — grouped and entitled "Readers Support PWS&D". I too support PWS&D through prayers, the mission work which I do at our church, sometimes through direct donations when there is a special appeal. However, I do not seem to share



## Pontius' Puddle





# PRESBYTERIAN Record

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the feelings of the letter writers who deemed the insert from World Vision to be "inappropriate, insulting, horrifying, and very disappointing". WOW — so now mission and the sharing of the tremendous wealth of the first world, is only appropriate if carried out through PWS&D? How insulting to our denomination! How narrow minded and parochial!

I wonder if the national office would be "horrified" to learn that Fallingbrook, the church which I attend, has, as well as raising money to dig a well and to purchase mosquito nets (both projects under the umbrella of PWS&D), also built a clinic in a slum in Nairobi (because we answered a personal appeal from a medical student who visited Fallingbrook)? Would they also be "horrified" that for the past two years we have collected "bags" for the relief work of the Mennonite Central Committee? We do this as a Christmas project but it could be done at any time of the year.

This year my husband and I made use of the World Vision catalogue, which came with the *Record*, to donate gifts, which we thought appropriate to mem-

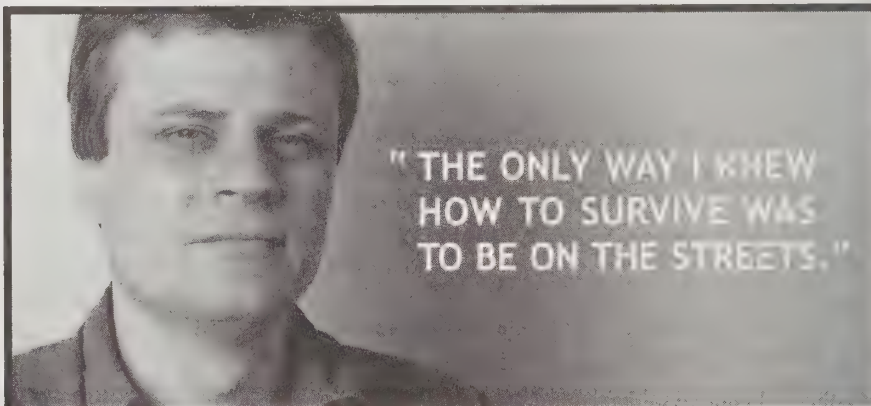
bers of our family. Instead of the usual package under the tree, our sister and brother in law (she's a master gardener) received the gift of ten fruit trees donated in their name. Our daughter and son in law who are dairy farmers were thrilled to know that a dairy cow was on its way to another part of the world as our gift to them. Perhaps the catalogue is too glossy and perhaps PWS&D will never compete with World Vision, but if that's all we as Presbyterians in Canada can think of when we receive such an insert, then no wonder our denomination is in trouble.

Liz Stark

Scarborough, Ont.

## Fight for your right to polity

I read Ty Ragan's article in the December *Record* with interest. I too have faced the challenge of how to open up the doors and chip away at the mortar of our churches so that young people can fit in. Here's my suggestion for Ty: treat yourself to a copy of the Book of Forms for Valentine's Day (get the "romancing the laity" edition). You're worth it! Then read the handy guide to how our church tries to get things



For most of my life it was the only thing I knew. I went through a lot of hell. I went through drug withdrawals and having no place to live. I went through most of my life having nothing. LOFT Community Services helped me get off the streets because they cared and they didn't want me to change. They didn't tell me that I had to get off the street, but they were there when I was ready to make the move. I came to McEwan House because they accepted me as I was and gave me the support I needed. I respect them for that.



[www.loftcs.org](http://www.loftcs.org)

To find out more about LOFT Community Services' values and work, or to make a donation, visit our website at [www.loftcs.org](http://www.loftcs.org) or call Irene at 416 979 1994, ext. 222. You can make a difference.

205 RICHMOND ST. W., SUITE 301, TORONTO, ON M5V 1V3 416 979 1994



done from cover to cover; learn to love it. Embrace this peculiar Presbyterian passion even if the dour prose makes your tattooed flesh crawl. As daunting (perhaps ludicrous) as it may sound, your long-term task is to clear a path for some of these multi-pierced, hell-bound, hormone-driven, not-necessarily-all-that-reformed whippersnappers about whom you write to one day get onto the Board of Managers (or the Session) in your church. Then they'll be given the keys to the church and they can open the doors personally. In my experience, you have to take the first step toward the "institutional" church — it won't come knocking on your wi-fi laptop at Starbucks. Of course, this will take time and a lot of running back and forth between coffee shops and big stone buildings. A decade or more of perspiration may be required before you see any results. But I'm sure you didn't become a leader in this whole Jesus thing expecting to beam anyone on board. Let this be your mantra: "By 2015 there will be at least one member of my church's Board of Managers with a tattoo." John Calvin took a similar approach in Geneva and look where that got us.

As I always say, you've got to fight for your right to polity.

*Alex MacLeod  
Toronto*

### It's our pleasure

The December cover was beautiful inside and out. The Nativity Window by Sarah Hall is inspirational. You are offering such a spread of subjects that should give us much to debate and think about.

*Elizabeth M. Tayti  
Welland, Ont.*

**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**

**Correction:** Erin Walton wrote the Called To Wonder for January 2005. We apologize to her for mislabeling the byline.

The Ghanaian Presbyterian church mentioned in our January News section is being built at the corner of Finch and the 400 in Toronto.

## In the wake of devastation...

Photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT



**Mary Sriyoyogaveni and David Shanmugarajah, a married couple who lost their home, their daughter and two grandchildren to the Dec. 26 tsunami, carry a pot of rice they cooked for themselves and other victims living in the Holy Trinity Methodist Church in Kaddaiveli, Sri Lanka. The shelter has received food and other emergency supplies from Action by Churches Together (ACT).**

In times of crisis PWS&D works with partners around the world to respond immediately — even before donations come in to help. Hours after the December 26 tsunami hit countries in Asia and Africa, PWS&D partners were on the scene. From the very beginning members of Action by Churches Together began mobilising relief teams and distributing food, water, emergency shelter materials, medicines, blankets, clothing and cooking utensils.

PWS&D partners know their communities and can effectively and efficiently deliver relief to where it is most needed. By working through local partners, we empower people to respond to the disasters in their own countries.

### Be there when a disaster occurs. Support PWS&D.

PWS&D's relief and development programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from *Presbyterians Sharing...*

For more information or to make a donation, write or call:

### Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)

50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7

Tel: (416) 441-1111 or toll-free 1-800-619-7301

E-mail: [pwdsd@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pwdsd@presbyterian.ca) Website: [www.presbyterian.ca/pwdsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwdsd)

Enclosed is my donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to PWS&D.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Province & Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your cheque payable to PWS&D

## Top ten Christian employers

Do Christians make good employers?

A coalition of Christian organizations, led by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, did a survey of Christian workplaces, based on Christ's example. These are the top ten Christian employers in Canada.

**Bethesda Christian Association, B.C.**  
Provides support to 240 people.

**Bible League of Canada, Ont.**  
Distributes bibles around the world.

**Centre Street Church, Alta.**  
A 4,600 member church in Calgary.

**Christian Direction, Que.**  
Works with inner-city and ethnic communities.

**Compassion Canada, Ont.**  
Sponsors 650,000 children around the world.

**Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Ont.**  
An affiliation of 140 denominations, ministries and institutions.

**Free Methodist Church in Canada, Ont.**  
Has 130 churches across the country.

**Muskoka Woods Sport Resort, Ont.**  
"Fun is our trademark" claims this Christian camp.

**Scott Mission, Ont.**  
Works on inner-city issues in downtown Toronto.

**Serving In Mission Canada, Ont.**  
Does mission work in South America, Africa and Asia.

To find out more, visit [www.cccc.org](http://www.cccc.org)

Amy MacLachlan

## Licence to kill

*A letter from Jerusalem*

by Gila Svirsky

It's been a terrible week. Our elderly cat was diagnosed with kidney failure, our newly built basement flooded with water from the winter rains, and Yelena was stabbed to death right over our heads.

I didn't hear Yelena's screams, as some of my neighbors did, but was awakened at 4:30 a.m. by the police trying to bash down my door, in search of her apartment. When they found her one flight up, she was already dead, lying in a pool of blood with stab wounds to her neck and chest, two horrified daughters (aged seven and eight) at her

side, and a boyfriend who claimed that he killed her in self-defense because she attacked him. Never mind that she was a graduate of a battered women's shelter and he had three complaints of assault filed against him. Never mind that she was 31, short and of slight build, and he 50, tall and solid. Somehow he had to stab her multiple times to protect himself.

Killing, in all its many forms — crime, political assassination, suicide bombings, and the war against terror — doesn't work. Why not? Because killing ultimately de-

stroys more than it saves. It destroys the victim, it destroys the families of the victims and perpetrators, it destroys masses of innocent bystanders, and it sends a message that violence is legitimate, thereby inviting another round of it.

A culture of violence filters down into society when its leaders use force to resolve problems. This culture of violence —

**A culture of violence filters down into society when its leaders use force to resolve problems**

loosening the reins on the use of force — is not an invention of TV and movies (which have certainly overdone it), but begins by personal example of those who influence our values

and norms: parents, political leaders, the most powerful nation on earth. What are we to learn when a superpower, with all imaginable means at its disposal, uses violence? When power and violence dominate political strategy, governments are issuing a license to kill, and that trickles right down to us and the apartments over our heads.

---

Gila Svirsky is a Jewish American living in Jerusalem. She heads an organization called Coalition for Peace. This is an excerpt of a letter she sent to Moderator Rick Fee.

## Faith will overcome dictatorship, Myanmarese told

A Vatican-based cardinal has urged Roman Catholics in Myanmar, a country ruled by a military junta that does not allow democratic elections, that their faith will help them overcome difficulties they face on a daily basis.

"Remain firm in your Christian identity, be heralds and missionaries in your vocation as witnesses of Christ in the society in which you live," he said. "We know the problems and difficulties of all kinds that you come across every day," and their striving for human development requires "much enthusiasm, prudence, persever-

ance and reflection," Cardinal Crescenzio Sepe said in a sermon.

Both Myanmar and Laos, a communist country, are described by human rights groups as dictatorships largely closed to the outside world.

A Protestant pastor told Ecumenical News International that Christian churches are "relatively" free to minister in Myanmar, "as long as they keep their heads down, restrict themselves to social development activities like health and education, and do not get involved in politics."

Michael Mettason, ENI

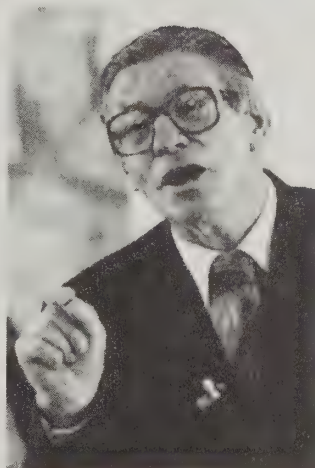




The Mennonite church has made an official application to join the Canadian Council of Churches. In a ceremony described by Principal Clerk Stephen Kendall as "a moving ecumenical moment for the Council," the application was welcomed. The Mennonites have a commitment to peace and justice. They will be named full members of the Council later this year. Seen here are Mr. Kendall (far left), Rev. Will Ingram, Sandra Demson (all from the PCC), Rev. Dr. Dan Nighswander, Rev. Peter Krause (the Mennonite Church) and Rev. Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the CCC.

## Naude widow responds to Moderator

*Moderator Rick Fee received a reply to his message of sympathy sent to the South Africa Council of Churches and to Ilse Naude, wife of the late Christiaan Frederick Beyers Naude who passed away in September. The hand written note said:*



"Thank you very much for your wonderful letter of September 18 addressed to the Rev. Dr. Molefe Tsele of the SACC regarding the passing away of my dear husband, Beyers Naude. Your letter filled my heart with so much peace and gratitude because you expressed so vividly

your appreciation of the work and Christian witness of Beyers and what it meant to you and many others of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I always thank God as I regard Beyers a gift from God not only to me but also to many others in the world. So wonderful! Yes God has been, and still is, so good to the family and me. Beyers has taught me so much about God, His grace and support which I am experiencing daily! A special gift from God was the wonderful privilege which

He granted me 64 very happy and blessed years of marriage — is this not wonderful?

"May God also bless you and all your dear ones as well at The Presbyterian Church in Canada with all His love, grace, joy and peace."

## Suicide in the Crystal Cathedral

Rev. Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, best known for its weekly Hour of Power broadcasts, was home to a suicide by one of its own leaders.

Johnnie Wayne Carl, 57, music director at the 10,000-member church in California, shot and killed himself in a church bathroom on Dec. 17. Carl, a native of Missouri, was an internationally known conductor and composer of over 3,500 pieces, and had worked with Celine Dion, John Tesh, and the London Symphony. He was a member of the church for nearly 30 years. He suffered from depression.

Carl fired about four random shots the previous evening. Police arrived shortly after, while the husband and father of three locked himself in his office. Police tried to convince him to come out, and eventually forced entry. Carl retreated to another room, where a single shot was fired. Police found Carl dead at 2 a.m.

*Amy MacLachlan*



# Presbyterians reach out to tsunami's victims

by Amy MacLachlan

**P**resbyterians across Canada donated more than \$345,000 to Presbyterian World Service and Development as of mid-January to help the victims left in the wake of the tsunami that hit southeast Asia. More donations arrive daily from individuals and congregations moved by the plight of millions.

The Canadian government announced it would match funds from individuals given to approved NGOs by Jan. 11 on a one-to-one basis. PWS&D was approved for fund matching on the day of the deadline.

Donations to PWS&D and directed to Canadian Foodgrains Bank are already matched by the Canadian International Development Agency on a four-to-one basis, but these funds are for specific

food aid projects only, and largely will not apply to tsunami relief due to government restrictions on grain purchased outside of Canada.

Two weeks after the disaster, PWS&D forwarded \$100,000 to Action by Churches Together (ACT) for its work in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia. PWS&D is a member of ACT, an international alliance of churches and relief agencies.

Once the emergency situation stabilizes and immediate needs are met, the next challenge to tackle is supporting the ravaged countries in the long-term. Rebuilding homes, lives and businesses is a top priority, said Karen Plater, communications coordinator for PWS&D. "Many of the people affected were fishermen and they lost their boats. And many small

shops along the beach were destroyed. Those people need help restarting their livelihoods."

She said many of PWS&D's overseas partners are still in the process of assessing the full list of long-term needs. She said since many of the areas were poor to begin with, any relief project should consider this fact when helping. "They need to consider how to make them sustainable communities, so people can continue their lives with dignity."

PWS&D, the relief and development arm of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, immediately responded to the mammoth 9.0 earthquake on Dec. 26. Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, Maldives and Bangladesh were seriously affected. As

## Government restriction hinders help to tsunami survivors

Restrictions on government subsidies given to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) may limit the help given to survivors of the tsunami. Donations are still being put to good use and CFGB is providing victims — particularly in India — with much-needed grain, rice and lentils. "We are responding," said CFGB executive director Jim Cornelius. "We just aren't able to use all of the funds from the government."

Funds given by CFGB in aid are matched at a ratio of 4:1 by the Canadian International Development Agency. However, in order to use 90 per cent of this grant, CFGB must purchase Canadian grain with the matched funds. Only 10 per cent can be used to buy grain in developing countries. Presbyterian World Service and Development supports CFGB.

The restriction is something CFGB has been fighting for seven years, arguing that it limits the flexibility to help those in need and can actually harm those waiting for help. "The disaster only hurt the coast of India. When you go back four or five kilometres, there's good agricultural land, with

good crops," said Cornelius. "Rice and lentils are readily available, but the people who need it can't afford to purchase it anymore. Their livelihood has been destroyed. And if we brought food in, we're also hurting the farmers. We want to give people the ability to rebuild their lives."

The aid currently being given to India by CFGB is almost exclusively coming from donations, since aid workers decided to purchase local grain instead of shipping from Canada. They have been able to respond fully to requests for food (including 740 metric tonnes of rice, lentils, oil, sugar and salt for 20,000 people) because of these donations; however, if the need continues in the long-term, they will be limited in their ability to help because they can't draw on the majority of their government funding.

Purchasing grain in Canada and shipping it to the affected country is useful in certain situations, particularly when a country has a drastic food shortage and has no grain at its disposal. But in a crisis situation, where food is available in large amounts and at a lesser cost, it makes little

sense to spend money to ship grain from Canada — an expensive and time-consuming process.

Cornelius said the current problem simply illustrates the larger issue of inflexible government policy when it comes to food aid. "Europe and Australia have changed their policies to be more flexible," he said. "Only the U.S. and Canada have such restrictive policies. Let's not stay behind. Let's create policies that make sense."

Australia allows up to 67 per cent of its food aid to be purchased locally. The European Union permits nearly unlimited purchase of local foods in specific situations, in certain countries. Similarly, CFGB wants to reach an agreement where allowances are made to buy local grains when such action is needed.

Cornelius said decreasing the reliance on Canadian grain for food aid will not hinder the Canadian market, as Canadian food aid equals less than one per cent of production of major commodities, and therefore, the change will be insignificant.

Amy MacLachlan



## Prayer vigil bridges differences

In the wake of the tsunami disaster, Presbyterian congregations are doing what they can to help. In Scarborough, Ont., Malvern Church helped plan and implement a multi-faith prayer vigil, held at the area's local shopping centre in early January. "It was wonderful to see a Muslim Imam, a Christian minister, and several Hindu representatives at the front of the group, using their own Scripture readings and offering their own prayers," said Rev. Wayne Kleinsteuber, of Malvern. "We have a lot of Sri Lankans and Tamils in the area, so it was a time for us to hold hands and comfort one another." Local police were on hand to collect donations for the Red Cross.

of January, a total of nearly 150,000 people had been confirmed dead, with more than 1.5 million people left homeless. Support from PWS&D is being directed by ACT, CFGB and the Institute for Development Education, India.

Immediate supplies such as food, clean water, temporary shelter, blankets, soap, cooking utensils and clothing were the first items to be dispensed. In India, Church's Auxiliary for Social Action, a member of ACT, is using 12 teams to meet the need.

Removing bodies and animal carcasses was an urgent task. Such action is necessary to prevent the spread of disease — a growing concern in areas left without sanitation. In early January, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan encouraged nations who pledged money to the afflicted countries to make good on their promises, reminding them of the World Health Organization's warning that 150,000 more people may die from disease.

Once the immediate needs are met, CASA is planning to help 5,000 families

with house reconstruction, while 15 flood and cyclone shelters will be constructed. Food-for-work programs will be established — where those being helped work for the aid they receive — to help people rebuild their lives.

The Institute for Development Education in Chennai, India, PWS&D's long-term development partner, is an example of the poor helping the poor. Women in communities where PWS&D programs are running are the ones responding — regardless of caste or religion. Only days after the disaster, PWS&D sent more than \$25,000 to help survivors.

In Canada, the PCC's International Ministries has sent \$10,000 from Presbyterians Sharing... to help the Church of North India repair damaged church buildings. Three clergy and their families were killed from the Church of North India, and nine churches were washed away.

To help in the relief effort, contact PWS&D directly at 1-800-619-7301, or contribute through your congregation. **R**



Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT International

A woman salvages a few of her belongings from the ruins of her house, smashed by the tsunami when it hit the town of Moratuwa, south of Colombo on the island nation of Sri Lanka.



## Indian churches urge interfaith response to pandemic

Churches in India have taken the lead in initiating an interfaith response to the scourge of HIV/AIDS, which in India is reaching massive proportions.

"The size, scale and speed of this pandemic has compelled us to come together on one platform despite our differences in faith and belief," noted the declaration, jointly organized in New Delhi by the Church of North India and the National Council of Churches, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches. The conference included an interfaith session in which Bahai, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Muslim and Sikh leaders expressed readiness to move with the churches in the fight against the AIDS pandemic.

India's National AIDS Control Organization has acknowledged there are 5.1 million HIV/AIDS infections at present, although non-governmental organizations and health experts say this estimate is far below the actual numbers.

This would give the world's second most populous nation the highest HIV/AIDS total of any country.

Mufti Mukarram Ahmed, a leading Muslim cleric in New Delhi, told the conference that AIDS called for a response "beyond medicines". He said the disease was rooted in "immoral behaviour", asserting "through religion, we can cure the society by educating our youth

on sticking to the moral teachings."

Mohinder Singh, director of Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, a leading Sikh research centre in New Delhi, said, "Many religious leaders do not have the courage to come out openly and address the [AIDS] issue." He stressed that an interfaith initiative to address AIDS collectively would change this attitude.

*Anto Akkara, ENI*

## Zimbabwean pastors practise what they preach

Twenty-seven Zimbabwean pastors from various Christian denominations have undergone a voluntary HIV test in a move aimed at removing stigma in the church against people living with HIV/AIDS.

"Very often pastors are accused of preaching what they do not practise, but now we have decided to lead by example," the Rev. Lindani Dube, chairman of the Mabvuku-Tafara Pastors' Fraternity, told journalists after the group of pastors went through counselling and testing at a centre run by the Zimbabwe Aids Prevention Services Organization.

He added, "We are positive that a lot of church members will take a cue from their pastors and opt to know their HIV status."

*ENI*



Caring for AIDS patients at Ekwendeni Hospital, in Malawi. See page 23 for more photographs taken by PWS&D photographer Carl Hiebert in Malawi.

Photo by Carl Hiebert, PWS&D



# Celebrating Black History Month

Although historically Scottish in origin, The Presbyterian Church in Canada has several vibrant congregations with predominantly black and multicultural members. University Presbyterian, Toronto, Malvern and St. David's, Scarborough, Eglise St. Luc, Montreal, and the Ghanaian Churches in Montreal and Toronto all have a large black contingent.

Half of Malvern's congregation is Indo-Caribbean, and one quarter is of African descent. In an effort not to single out a particular group, the congregation won't formally celebrate Black History Month in church. However, the diverse mix of people at Malvern — located in one of Toronto's most troubled neighbourhoods — provides new ways to worship in a Presbyterian church. Rev. Wayne Kleinstein, minister at Malvern, enjoys the church's upbeat atmosphere. "We're definitely having fun!" he said. To honour his congregation's African contingent, services sometimes include a traditional African-style offering procession, accompanied by joyous singing and dancing. This new year marks the second time Malvern has had a new year's eve service, which is an African and Caribbean custom.

Knox College is recognizing the month by welcoming Rev. Collin Cowan, a United Church minister in Kingston, Jamaica and Moderator of the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. He will be speaking with students and clergy, and will participate in discussion forums.

Black history has been celebrated in the United States since 1926, when it was named Negro History Week. In 1976, the event grew into Black History Month, and is now celebrated internationally in February.

It was originally created by American historian Carter G. Woodson. He recognized the absence of black history in official books and records, and sought to raise awareness of contributions made by Africans. Canada joined the movement in 1995, when parliament officially recognized the commemorative month. The motion was brought forward by Jean Augustine, the first black woman to be elected to parliament.

The first recorded person of African descent to enter Canada was Mathieu de Costa in 1604. It is believed he arrived with Samuel de Champlain, and worked as an interpreter between the Europeans and Canada's aboriginal peoples. Although de Costa was a free man, slavery existed in Canada from 1628 until it was abolished in 1883. Upper Canada (what is now Ontario) abolished slavery 90 years earlier. Because of Canada's decision, the country was an important refuge for blacks escaping slavery in the U.S. through the Underground Railroad.

According to the 2001 Census, more than 650,000 Canadians called themselves black; 78 per cent of which live in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal and Halifax.

*Amy MacLachlan*

## An accounting of AIDS

Presbyterians have responded by raising \$92,000 for the Towards A World Without AIDS campaign. Already \$80,000 has been allocated to support new work of our overseas church partners struggling to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in their countries.

About 70 per cent of all admissions to Ekwendeni Hospital, in Malawi, are HIV-positive. Ekwendeni Hospital established an AIDS program working in orphan care, home-based care, counselling, education, and prevention programs in 1988. \$40,000 is going to help the Ekwendeni Hospital AIDS program expand its voluntary counselling and testing, and prevention of mother-to-child transmission activities. Malawi has one of the highest HIV infection rates in Africa, and the world.

A lot of this money has been raised through the efforts of congregations like these:

### Riverside, Windsor, Ont.

Our Christmas Eve service this year was Christmas Around the World. One of our 'stops' is Malawi, where I gave the congregation a bit of the information PWS&D sent along. We sang the Christmas song from Malawi that's in our Book of Praise (#155). Some of our folks responded financially with the use of the envelopes that went in the bulletins.

I hope it all serves to raise the awareness of our congregation to the church's mission in the wider world.

*Nancy Carle*

### Knox, Wanham, Alta.

Our congregation holds a community dinner twice a year to raise funds for the church. Usually the funds go to help our own expenses, as we are a small, rural, aid-receiving congregation. This fall however we were within our own budget, and the congregation decided this would be a good opportunity to support the national Towards A World Without AIDS campaign. An ad was put in the local weekly newspaper inviting folks to come and share in this project. About 95 people participated in the evening, which also included a silent auction. I gave a brief outline of the goals of the campaign, and what the national church is doing to help those around the world, but particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, suffering from this pandemic. Our community and church raised \$1,420 that evening to give to the campaign. My most exciting moment came when a woman, who does not attend church, came up to me and quite excitedly said, "Wow! I didn't know the Presbyterian Church did stuff like this!"

*Shirley Cochrane*

# Candidates address essential

## 131st General Assembly

*Four nominees, many different facets of the church. Rural issues, elder and laity education, international ministries, urban challenges. The nominees focus on these concerns and much more. Although a new candidate can always be nominated at assembly (this year in Edmonton, Alta., in June) these are the forerunners.*

### Rev. George Malcolm

Forbes Church, Grande Prairie, Alta. Involved in rural and remote ministries for 25 years. Currently convener of Assembly Council and clerk of Peace River Presbytery. Served on national committees including Board of Ministry, Life and Mission Agency Committee and Remote Ministries Consultations for Canada Ministries. Grandfather, Rev. Alexander Nimmo, was moderator, 1959.



**I** come from a small presbytery — it's still called a frontier by some! So I bring that rural and small town perspective. I've been in the Presbyterian Church all my life. My family has been here for years. Those who know me, know I'm a down to earth kind of person, and a practical type of minister. I believe it's important to encourage people in their faith and in their lives, and to stay in touch with people in the community and in the congregation. You could say I'm a pastoral kind of minister, which I learned from my father, who was general secretary of the Board of World Mission. Fancy words and great preaching are good to have, but to me, the pastoral element is important too. I want to be there to hear what people are saying and carry that wherever it needs to go.

"The Church has to get back to being the Church. There are many societal issues to deal with today, but the key is to stay faithful to what the gospel is about. We have to deal with the issues, I know, and the denomination struggles with some of them, and they should be addressed, but don't get wrapped up in them. I get frustrated by the talk of declining numbers. Don't ignore it, but don't make it your central focus. We always hear that our numbers are down, but what can we do about it and how can we be faithful with what we can do?"

"I only have a rough idea, but my focus will probably be on remote and rural ministries. I want to encourage those congregations and let them know that even though they may be small, they can still have meaningful ministries. Perhaps they're not as grandiose as some large, urban churches, but in some ways, they can do more. And I'd say to the more central, urban churches that you can't forget about your smaller brothers and sisters."

### Rev. M. Jean Morris

Director, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Services, Bethany Care Society, Calgary, Alta. Former minister at Ailsa Craig, Ont., St. Andrew's and Varsity Acres, Calgary. Leads workshops, retreats, and conferences. Former moderator of Calgary-McLeod Presbytery, and Synod of Alberta and the Northwest. Previously involved with Canada Ministries and Board of Ministries. Father, Rev. Harrold Morris, was moderator, 1989.



**M**y spiritual formation has been within the PCC — it has shaped me with its theology, its practice, and its culture. My current position is leader of an ecumenical pastoral team. We have diverse gifts, faith traditions and backgrounds, but we come together and seek to serve Christ and those in need of pastoral care, and that binds us together.

"My focus would probably be on seniors and persons with disabilities. These people are often forgotten, certainly by government policies and funding, but often by their faith communities as well. A focus on chaplaincies and institutional and organizational ministries is also needed. We tend to be congregationally focused, and that is the heartbeat of our church, but there are other ministries that are important. Ecumenism and the continued strengthening of our relationship with other communities of faith and emphasizing those things we share, is also important.

"There is a need for really effective pastoral care at every level; meaning pastoral care of and within presbyteries and sessions. There is a lot of concern and heartache in the church and leaders need to be caring and effective. I believe we want to be better caregivers of each other and to demonstrate grace, compassion and justice, and we need to keep growing in our ability to express that. I think the church is called to continue its nurturing of people — and that's a call to all of us, both clergy and laity — in an expression of faith that goes beyond Sunday morning and outside church walls. I love the line in *Living Faith* that says, 'The church is Christ together with his people, called both to worship and to serve Him in all of life.' That's our ongoing challenge. How does the church express the transforming love of God to the world? It's something to work on in the church, but it's also a call to be active in the world. The church has to search for ways to do that, both relevantly and faithfully."



# Issues for church's future

## Nominees for Moderator

by Amy MacLachlan

To date, ballots have been sent to presbyteries, where ministers, diaconal ministers, and ruling elders will make their selections. Ballots will be returned to the Assembly Office by the end of March, and the Committee to Advise will tally the results on April 1. The official nominee will be formally chosen and inducted at assembly.

### Rev. J.P. Ian Morrison

General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency, The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Former minister at St. Giles, Prince George, B.C., and Central Church, Vancouver. Was acting dean of St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology, and associate secretary for Canada Ministries under Board of World Mission. Former moderator, presbyteries of Kamloops, Westminster and Pickering, and Synod of British Columbia.



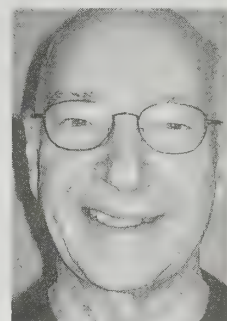
**I**'ve been quite involved in the residential schools issue. I hope that continues to be an emphasis for the church, and that it would move beyond the courts into healing and reconciliation. I want to continue to encourage a response to the AIDS campaign. Also, the Life and Mission Agency has given resources to the church such as *Called to Covenant*, *Stewards by Design* and *Starting Well*. I want to promote the use of these resources. I also want to encourage congregations to be involved with the *Presbyterian Record*. If we're not willing to dialogue in a healthy way, we might be in trouble. We must be willing to speak the truth in love.

"I would like to keep before the church the need to be involved in mission — locally, nationally, and internationally. I think a church that's not looking at that is a church looking too closely inwards, and that's always a danger. We need to focus on the good things the church is doing, and doing well. We have to encourage and support them.

"A challenge to the church is how Canadian people relate to Aboriginal peoples. If we don't do that well, we will repeat the past 100 years, and I'm not sure we can afford to. Individual congregations need to be looking at health, and a sense of being who God wants them to be at this time in their history. For some individuals, there needs to be a willingness to yield to change that helps bring in God's reign on earth. As a denomination, we need to work a bit harder on presbytery-congregation relations, and on how to strengthen them. *Called to Covenant* is a resource they should take seriously, both for its theological underpinnings and practical resources. We also have to look at developing leadership in the church, and leaders that are willing to learn and grow, and promoting what the colleges and the Elder's Institute are offering."

### Mr. Leslie Young

Elder, Westmount Church, Edmonton, Alta. Former moderator, Edmonton-Lakeland Presbytery. Served on national committees including Live The Vision campaign, designed *New Mission For The Future Of The PCC*, and was advisory council to Elders' Institute, St. Andrew's Hall. Eighteen-year member of Alberta Legislative Assembly. Currently chairs Local Authorities Pension Plan board, and vice-chair, Alberta Blue Cross.



**F**rom my experience with large and small groups in church, political and corporate settings, I've honed my skills in chairing, listening, empowering and motivating volunteers and staff. I have experience with stewardship in the economic and political sectors, and experience in dealing with social issues. I was with the Ministry of Labour for seven years, working on income distribution. I have had some involvement with the Native community, and have been a member of session for many years. I have experience in the church from a lay person's perspective.

"I think we're struggling to adjust, at the congregational level in particular, to changes in society without losing the fundamental understandings of our denomination. Addressing this challenge probably involves change, and it certainly involves an understanding of what's happening around us. This should become something that is real to congregations, where there is a significant population. In some rural areas, decline may be inevitable because of a decline in the surrounding population, but that's not so often in urban areas. Laity and growth are connected, and there is a huge well-spring of resources in our laity that isn't being exercised at the moment.

"A good understanding of the manner in which our church courts function is really important, and understanding the opportunity that exists in our laity is important. The challenge to a non-teaching elder who may come to the courts is very large. They often don't have the understanding or involvement required to make the best contribution they can. We have to make the most of our laity. There is huge potential, in no small measure, that goes untapped. It is a problem that is contributing to the lack of growth in our denomination. It is not the only issue, but it should be addressed. We haven't recognized the stewardship opportunities that exist with our laity." **R**



St. Andrew's, Kingston, Ont. has published its history in the book *The Rock and the Sword*, by Brian Osborne. Mr. Osborne is a professor of history at Queen's University. His students were instrumental in researching the book, as was St. Andrew's War Veteran's Association, which funded the project. Flanking the author in the middle are the Association's vice-president, Mitch Scott (left) and president, Bill Bentley. To get a copy call the church.



Marilyn Coupal and Cathy Gee are thrilled that the 136 anniversary celebration at Gale, Elmira, Ont., was a great success. They are surrounded by the displays from the first Congregational Fair which showcased the work various church groups do throughout the year.

Knox, Meaford, Ont., has been filled with music — choir, organ, handbells and chimes — for twenty years thanks to Eleanor McDougall. The church surprised her last September with a special ceremony and a luncheon. Eleanor's guidance represents a major portion of the church's 150 years of faithful service.



Sara Arnold served Bradner, Abbotsford, B.C., for 36 faithful years as clerk. Upon her retirement last September the congregation threw her a party in thanks. Rev. Elizabeth McLagan presents Sara with a small token of the church's esteem.



## Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PCRecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:PCRecord@presbyterian.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to:

The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified.

The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.

Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs will not be returned.



▶ Ron Wallace and Joy Randall of International Ministries meet with students at Chungshun Medical University in Taiwan. Second to right is Dr. Michael Tai, who teaches as an associate missionary at the University.



◀ The Presbyterian church in Kitimat, B.C., has served its community for 50 years. Seen here inaugurating the party are Rev. Bruce Gourlay (left), Alison Piques and Allister Boyd, Clerk of Session.

▽ Victoria Ingram happily shares her experiences of Tanzania — where she worked on a bio-sustainable agricultural program for Global Services Corps — at the Men's Breakfast, Knox, Bobcaygeon, Ont.



△ Dr. William Klassen, renowned New Testament scholar, spoke at St. Andrew's, Toronto annual fall supper seminar. With him is George Vais, associate minister in charge of adult ministries.

Ken Innis (People and Places, November 2004) was celebrated for 20 years of ministry in the Presbytery of Winnipeg. He has been a minister since 1969. He, and his wife Carole, received a gift of a Red River Ox Cart and a rose bush. We apologize for any misrepresentation.



Mary Lou Johnston (far right) was the guest speaker at St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont., Mission Sunday last November 21. She spoke of her work in Nigeria and India. Seen with her, from left, Rev. Elizabeth Kidnew, Clerk of Session Dolores MacLeod, and president of the Women's Association, Marilyn Leslie.



Rev. Ernest Zugor (center) has much to celebrate these days. First, 58 years with his wife Margot. And, 40 years since his ordination. Rev. Cedric Pettigrew marks the party with cake, at Erskine, Ottawa.

Paul Cornish, celebrating 25 years as Executive Director of Fernie House Child & Youth Services, thanks *Record* columnist Michael Coren for his address at the Fernie House 40th Anniversary Service at Trinity Presbyterian, Toronto.



Rev. Dr. Raymond Hodgson, of St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont., happily presents a cheque to Sue LeClair, Residential Manager of Sarnia Community Girl's Home. Thrilled to be helpful are Mission Team members Marlys Goodfellow and Mac MacDonald. St. Andrew's supports several local organizations; as well as national and international organizations through PWS&D.



A century ago, on Nov. 29, 1904, 17 women from St. Andrew's, New Glasgow, N.S., met in the church parlour to inaugurate their chapter of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society. Elsie Mackay was born seven years later, and has been a member of the Society for over sixty years. On Dec. 1, 2004 members of the newly named Elsie Mackay Auxiliary AMS met to celebrate their centenary. From left, Olive Bowen, secretary, Elsie MacKay, Bertha Johnston, Margaret Craig, President Patsy MacKay, Elsie's daughter.




△ The first Sunday of Advent along with St. Andrew's Day were celebrated on Nov. 28, 2004. Starting off the Christmas season was Rev. Duncan Kennedy with special music by Master Piper John Yourt. Many came in kilts, tartans & memorabilia to mark the occasion. Front row from left: Beatrice Elliott, Ann Leyenaar, Pyillis MacMaster, Margaret Simpson. Back row: Katherine Spruit, Marilyn Wouters, Cecil Simpson, Jack Yourt, Rev. Duncan Kennedy and David Lockhead.

Several historical moments captured in one event: Joy Nugent was presented a copy of a biography of her cousin Stanford Reid by the author A. Donald MacLeod at Candlish, Kinnear's Mills, QC, on Oct. 17. Candlish celebrated its sesquicentennial in a joint service with St. Andrew's, Inverness, QC that day. Reid's family congregation, Reid's Church, amalgamated with Candlish in 1952.



△ Robbie Burns Day at St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont. If you're planning to show off your kilt at this event, be warned. It is sold out two months in advance and reaches well beyond the congregation to the whole community. An important example of haggis as ministry.



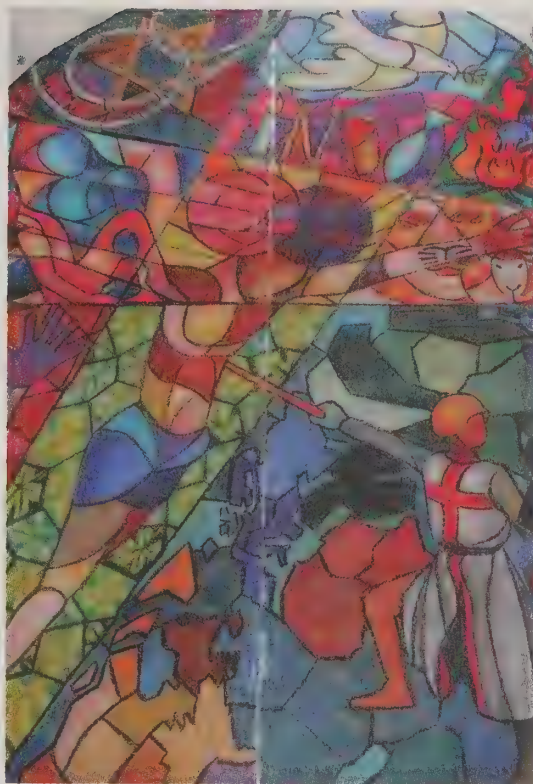
A man with dark hair is sitting on a wooden chair, focused on knitting a piece of wool. He is wearing a green sweater with a colorful floral pattern and blue jeans. The piece he is knitting is also colorful, with a mix of red, yellow, and blue. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The floor is covered with various colorful knitted items, including a large red and orange piece in the foreground. The overall scene is one of a dedicated knitter in his workspace.

# Stained wool windows

Searching for answers with  
needles and yarn

by Amy MacLellan





Photos by Andrew Faiz

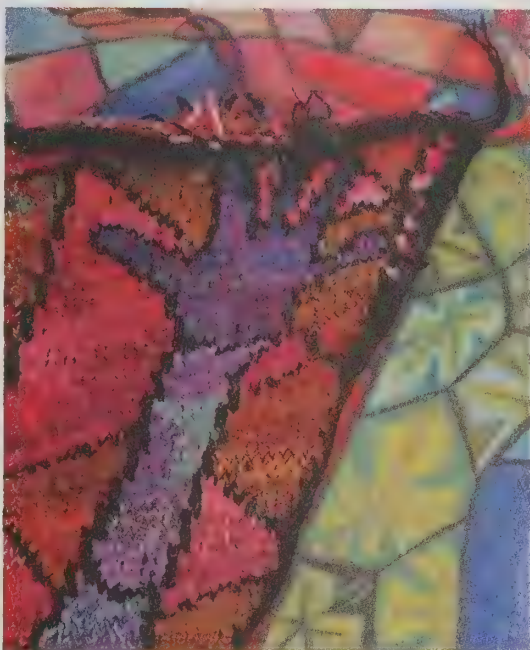
The task is far from finished. Pieces of *Stitched Glass* lie incomplete on the floor, knitted art waiting to become stained glass windows of wool. The brightly coloured yarn is woven together to form both images of old — Christ on a cross, a Catholic crusader, the Star of David — and new — an American army helmet, a pink triangle, barbed wire from a Holocaust camp. The play between positive and negative imagery is unmistakably mirroring the ups and downs of the church through time.

The design of *Stitched Glass* and the knitting itself is the brainchild of Kirk Dunn, a Christian artist, husband and father, and a man who struggles with the two sides of the church he grew up in.

He thinks there is a schism between what Jesus Christ said and did and what the organized church throughout history has done. "I've always been uncomfortable with this and embarrassed by it," said Dunn. "Of course, it's not only Christians who can be like this. It's a human thing. It runs through every religion."

The son of a Presbyterian minister, Dunn has thought about religion and its ironies for years. *Stitched Glass* — four, five-by-eight-foot knitted "windows" that mimic the colour and style of stained glass — was born from those thoughts.

The finished product will consist of four separate windows: three depicting Christianity, Islam and Judaism in positive and negative lights, and the fourth



Details from *Stitched Glass* showing a Crusader in WWI helmet piercing Christ on the cross.

containing favourable aspects of all three faiths. The project will consume \$10,000 worth of yarn, enough to fill 25 large Rubbermaid bins. The materials would barely fit into an eight-by-twelve-foot office.

The window on Christianity is the only one started so far. The design of the other three windows has yet to take shape. "I have no idea when it will be

done," he said, whose young family, a recent move and renovations, and part-time jobs that help put food on the table, occupy valuable knitting time. "I take some cheer that other artists take years to finish a project!"

The finished windows will mirror Dunn's view of how religion should be seen; something that came to him as he researched his faith's history. "There were people who disagreed in the past," said Dunn, just as members of various religions and denominations disagree today. "It makes me see Christianity and all religions as works in progress. If there have been any realizations on my part," he continued, "it's been around that idea."

Dunn started to knit in 1988 as a macho attempt to outdo a female friend with whom he shared a competitive relationship. In a game of "anything you can do, I can do better," he completed his first knitting project — a sweater he gave to his girlfriend. It was a big hit and one year later, he had been convinced to knit eight more sweaters for family members. In awe of the beauty of

stained glass from a young age, he embarked on his present project after being urged by his wife, Claire. He applied for and received a \$45,000 Chalmers Arts Fellowship that is enabling him to complete the massive piece.

While some knitting enthusiasts perfect intricate stitches and patterns, the beauty of colour is what steals Dunn's attention. He also loves creating



a functional piece of art. "You can make something where there was nothing before," he said. "It's useful, functional and of real value and it's made with love and care. It can outlast people and even become an heirloom."

An actor at heart, Dunn often knits in public — much to the delight of female onlookers. "I was out with a friend once and he said to me, 'I can't believe you're doing that in public!' And then a beautiful woman came up to me and started talking." Women often approach him with their husbands, or mothers with their sons, trying to show them that despite popular opinion, men can knit. "They come up to me and say, 'That's great!' And then to their husbands they say, 'See? You can do that!'"

His wife knows his knitting skills are a chick magnet. Married for 13 years, they have two children — Emmett, age four, and Findley, six. And his father, Zander, who has returned as minister to his very first charge at St. Paul's on Amherst Island, Ont., isn't surprised by the negative references to Christianity in the knitted works. This is a response that Dunn hopes will repeat itself in the larger church population. "My family and I have studied Christianity a lot so we know its history and its weaknesses, so it's not so shocking."

Such acceptance may be hard to come by from people of other faiths. Dunn's criticism of a faith that isn't his own may be difficult to swallow for some. In the Jewish window, there will be a bulldozer

knocking down Palestinian settlements, and in the Muslim window, planes will be crashing into skyscrapers. "I've tried to offend everybody equally!" he said. "But it will be more offensive to people whose faith I don't share."

His criticisms come from the conflicting messages Dunn has received about Christianity throughout his life. "Both *Stitched Glass* and my experience with Christianity have the same root," he said. "My experience has been very positive; one of inclusion and pro-action. But I have seen a lot of other people's experience not being that." Even within the various congregations he has been a part of, Dunn has witnessed views, words and actions that left him shaking his head. "I thought, 'no wonder some people have a bad view of Christianity and look at you sideways when you say you're a Christian.' It's equated with, in the worst cases, hypocrisy."

Judgmental attitudes, standoffishness and exclusion are other things he balks at — characteristics Dunn calls "the antithesis of what Christianity should be about."

Such contradictions make up the meat of *Stitched Glass*. "It's an ironic thing," said Dunn. "You have religions that are derivative and incredibly close...that have a tumultuous history. And that's still being played out today."

"What I hope to do with *Stitched Glass* is explore that, and hopefully demonstrate that there is no villain — or maybe that we're all villains and heroes. There is good and bad in all religions."

During his research for *Stitched Glass*, Dunn realized that doctrine, knowledge and opinions are always changing, and faith followers should keep such potential for change in mind. "It would be a much better place and make things much easier in this world if everyone saw their religion as a work in progress," he said. "That self-centeredness, that idea of 'I've got all the answers,' and 'I'm the one who is right,' if we got rid of that, there would be hope."

Despite the negative images contained in the first three windows, Dunn wants to use the fourth window to inspire such hope. "The window that has images of all three religions shows the common ground," he said. "That's what is important and our individual faith preferences shouldn't get in the way." ■

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# Beauty and Tragedy

PWS&D photographer captures life in Africa from a wheelchair

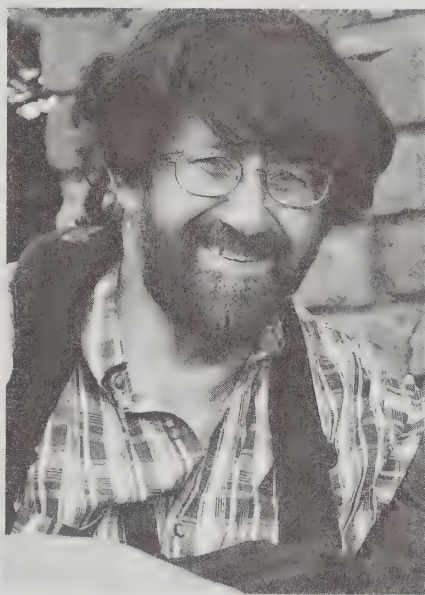
by Amy MacLachlan  
Photos by Carl Hiebert

Being a paraplegic doesn't stop Carl Hiebert from flying his own plane around the world, and taking hundreds of photographs. His confinement to a wheelchair, though challenging, actually enables him to take better shots — especially in sensitive situations. "I'm seen as a curiosity rather than a potential threat," said Hiebert. "People are more willing to receive me. It's a more gentle approach."

Such an advantage is useful when photographing adults dying of AIDS and their orphaned children in Africa. His trips to countries devastated by the disease led him to a partnership with Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Last April, Hiebert photographed the effects of AIDS in Malawi to be used by PWS&D. "AIDS is our biggest pandemic ever," he said. "There is a moral imperative for all of us to make some kind of response to that, and to recognize the sheer magnitude of what kind of crisis this is."

The pictures he took during his trip demonstrate his knack for catching people at their most real. "The photos he shot do more than tell the story of AIDS," said Karen Plater, communications coordinator at PWS&D. "They capture the rich vibrancy of life in Malawi. He takes the statistics and transforms



A bewigged Carl Hiebert in Malawi.

them into people's lives... He captures the heart of them."

Hiebert understood the immediacy of the situation when he visited Uganda in February, where he photographed a young boy living with AIDS. When Hiebert returned home in March, he got news that the boy had died. "None of us should have any preconceived ideas of how we can fix the problem. The responsibility we have is to go to these places and identify the mavens who are there

and empower them to make the changes," he said. "We're dealing with behavioural change, and such finely-tuned cultural nuances, that it takes indigenous people to adequately respond."

Dubbed one of Canada's top-10 adventurers by the Canadian Press, his commitment to various charities began when he flew an open cockpit ultra-light aircraft across Canada in 1986 to raise money for the Canadian Paraplegic Association. Five years prior, Hiebert broke his back in a hang-gliding accident. The life-changing incident gave Hiebert a new appreciation for people struggling to overcome huge challenges.

For Hiebert, who traces his roots to a Southern Ontario Mennonite community, perfecting his craft is a life's work. Despite three coffee-table books, countless world excursions, and a quarter century of experience, Hiebert admits there is a lot left to learn. "I'm still working on it," he said. "I've never got to the point where I can call myself a photographer."

The photos displayed on the following pages demonstrate Hiebert's remarkable ability to capture life at its most vulnerable and beautiful moments. "It's an intuitive thing," he said. "It's about building a relationship and earning the trust of your subjects."

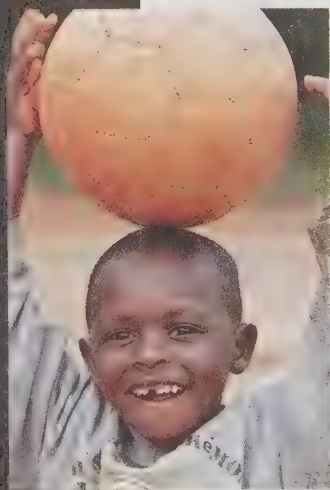


6 We have never, in human history, been ready for such an onslaught of orphans. There's absolutely no precedent anywhere in the annals of humankind that has given us a sense of what to do about millions of orphans, in country after country. These are lovely kids, like every kid everywhere in the world, but they feel bewildered and abandoned and angry and sometimes anti-social and they crave nurture and love like you cannot believe.

*All quotes from  
Stephen Lewis,  
UN special envoy for  
HIV/AIDS in Africa*



Carmen Bezner Kerr plays with a next-door neighbour. Carmen's mom, Rachel is a Canadian who has worked in Malawi at PCC-supported Ekwendeni Hospital. "This shows totally integrated play and acceptance — no thought is given to their difference," said Hiebert. "It's one of the more moving photographs for me."



Almost half of Malawi's population are children under 14, many of whom are orphaned and/or heads of their families. But, kids are still kids. "Kids play soccer everywhere," said Hiebert. "They never seem to tire of it."

Three generations — grandmother on the left, her daughter on the right, and granddaughter in between — are an example of what AIDS is doing to African nations. Although the granddaughter has not yet been tested, the fact that her young mother (and grandmother) is infected does not bode well. "They had a desk in their home that was their only piece of formal furniture," said Hiebert. "The mother and the grandmother went on at length of how great it is to have the support workers visit. They said, 'they can't bring much, but they bring themselves', and that really means a lot to them."

And the terrible thing about orphans in Africa, as a consequence of AIDS, is that they're not orphaned when their parents die, they become orphans while their parents are dying. They try to find a new mat for the mother to lie on. And then they stand in the huts and they watch their mothers die and I've never been able to understand how you repair the emotional structure of those kids, how they function later on.







In some African countries, people are being buried every day because of AIDS. Teachers, health care workers and police are badly-hit categories. "In Lilongwe [Malawi's capital city], the best part of one street was mostly coffin makers," said Hiebert. "It's big business, and it's hard to keep up with the demand."

Children often contract HIV through mother-to-child transmission, while otherwise healthy children end up orphans when their parents die from the disease. To date, 13 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi runs an orphan feeding program for children left to fend for themselves. "It looks like the little girl on the right is two, going on 30. It's uncanny, how they can sleep in comfort while hundreds of kids are around them, clamouring for lunch. And the other kids are respectful of their space," said Hiebert. "It's a very strong image."



You go into the pediatric wards, every 10 minutes there is an anguished howl that sears the psyche and you turn around and there's a woman kneeling by a cot, four and five infant kids in the cot, a combination of AIDS and famine in that particular situation.

And she's weeping, and the nurse comes in with a white sheet and covers up the infant babe and takes the child away.



A man in a rural area in the advanced stages of AIDS is visited by a support counsellor. The white cream on his lips is to relieve the sores on his mouth. "The support worker brought him a blanket and he was ever so thankful," said Hiebert. "I always feel humbled and honoured that people let me come into their lives and take pictures, when they don't know what they'll be used for. I try to capture them with a sense of dignity."

6 If you have prevalence rates between the ages of 15 and 49 of 10 per cent, 15 per cent, 30 per cent, 35 per cent, 40 per cent, year after year after year, it eats away at the capacity of the country. You lose the productive age groups between 15 and 49.







Women are the hardest hit by the AIDS crisis. They contract the disease at a disproportionate rate compared to men, and must care for family members who are infected. Here, a single mom infected with AIDS uses music to deal with her reality.

"Her way of dealing with AIDS and poverty was to make up and sing songs about Jesus and hope," said Hiebert. "She sang several songs for me. It was a very powerful experience."

Moms in Malawi are used to multi-tasking. They usually carry the burden of caring for the home and family, as well as providing extra income through farming or selling goods in the market. Here, a woman with AIDS carries one child on her back, while she grinds corn and washes another baby. "I was impressed by her spirit and her smile," said Hiebert, "and her will to carry on."

The figures are reasonably well-known but they always stun me a little, even in the repetition, that of the 25 million people living with the virus in sub-Saharan Africa between the ages of 15 and 49, 58 per cent are women. And if you narrow the category to the ages of 15 to 24 where there are 6 to 8 million people living with the virus, 75 per cent are young women and girls.







Two men from a drama group in Ekwendeni teach children about HIV. A young girl watches with delight. "What caught me about this situation was the patch of light falling just on her," said Hiebert. "It's been said that the subject is nothing — lighting is everything. The subject almost becomes secondary."



“And I thought to myself, has the world gone mad? How is this possible at the beginning of the 21st Century? How have we come to this? How have we permitted it to happen?”



# Summer Days

## The Presbyterian way

by Nancy Devine



**P**icture fun-filled days of endless activity, faith and friendship. That's what campers experience at Glen Mhor Camp at Echo Lake in the Muskoka district of Ontario.

Beth Allison, the camp's director for the past seven years, says she's eagerly looking forward to the start of this year's summer camp season. This year marks Glen Mhor's 75th anniversary.

In 1930, James Playfair, a prominent ship owner based in Midland, Ontario, donated Glen Mhor on Lake Simcoe near Beaverton as a summer camp — a place “for the training and recreation of the young people of the Presbyterian Church.”

By the 1970s, the Lake Simcoe location was too small. So, the camp moved to the present site, which includes 197 acres of land, featuring waterfront cabins, an arts and crafts cabin, and a nature centre.

Today, Glen Mhor operates almost year round, welcoming school groups in the off-season, and providing programming for church youth groups in both the early summer and fall.

In the summer, in one-week sessions from July 3 to Aug. 27, campers are welcomed into an environment that encourages each one of them to discover who they are in God's eyes, says Allison, who has been involved in organized camping for more than 24 years, as both a camper and leader. Her husband Travis has been involved with Presbyterian Church camping for the past 16 years, 11 of them at Glen Mhor.

“We are a community of people who accept each other for who we are. We leave all the stereotypes you may have learned about yourself at school or wherever at home. Here, even if you are the shyest kid at school, you'll find a place,” she says.

Campers work in cabin groups, and together they choose group activities throughout the week. They not only learn about the value of consensus decision-making, each member also gets a say in trying new things.

“At camp, we work hard to make sure that there is a level playing field,” Allison says. “There's something for everyone to do. We've even come up with tough puzzles to challenge the real thinkers in the group. Everyone gets a chance to try something.”

The day also includes a Bible study and discussion, and a chance for campers to examine their faith outside of the traditional church experience.

“We've found that camp can be an incredible part of their faith journey,” she says. “Especially for those in their early and middle teens. They are really questioning what they believe, and a

*(continued on page 32)*

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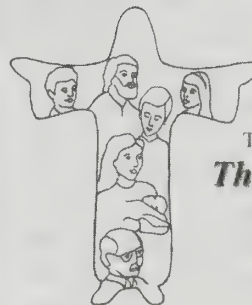


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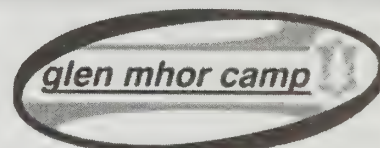


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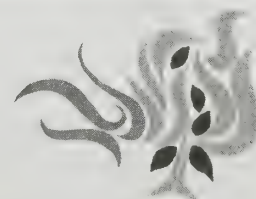


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Presbyterian Church in Canada  
Toronto - Kingston Synod

## Synod Camping

... receiving grace, showing grace.



lot of their parents are telling them they can choose to go to church or not. In a lot of ways, they are learning to adopt the faith for themselves. At camp, they have the chance to study and talk about their faith and lead worship."

The co-ed camp offers sessions for seven to 10-year-olds, nine to 12 year-olds and a teens-only session for 13 to 15 year-olds. There are 96 spaces for most sessions, and the teens-only session has 102 spaces. A week at camp costs \$350, with some additional costs if there are field trips planned.

The camp is staffed with kind, caring, safety conscious and faithful people, who are selected for their ability to work with campers with a wide range of needs, abilities and experiences. Many return year after year to work at Glen Mhor, and Allison estimates there's almost 600 years of combined camping experience at work each summer. Nonetheless, the staff

(new and returning) trains for up to 14 days before the first campers arrive.

"You really see them grow," she says. "There's one who has been a camper for the past 10 years, and I'm just waiting for her to be old enough to become a counsellor."

### Is it safe? Does it serve the community? Is it good stewardship? Will it enhance self-esteem?

Staff and campers alike are governed by the camp's code of conduct — the four S's: Safety, Stewardship, Servanthood and Self-Esteem.

"They are really four questions, and if you want to do something, and can answer yes to all four questions, then you can go ahead and do it. Is it safe? Does it serve the community? Is it good stewardship of God's resources?

Will it enhance someone's self-esteem?"

These guiding principals will not only help campers make good decisions at camp, but also in life, she says.

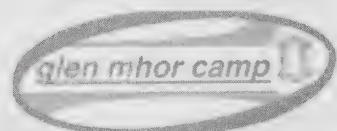
Allison says she and her husband feel both called to be in their ministry and privileged to be part of campers' faith journeys.

"We've seen them try new things, and if they fail, they'll get help and encouragement," she adds. "Here we want to help them focus on what's inside too."

For more information on Glen Mhor Camp, session availability, a downloadable registration package, log on to <http://www.glenmhorcamp.com/root.html> ■

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# A time to learn, a time to teach

*A 'wicked' time in God's green acres*

by Donald W. MacKay

Here is an unabridged letter of appreciation received from a returning camper in the Intermediate II Camp at Camp Geddie.

Dear Camp Geddie,

This has been my forth year coming to camp and its been the best year ever! I'm the one in intermediate 2 who kept sleep walking and talking in the night in cabin 7. You guys are the best! I don't know if I ll be attending camp next year but I will definety reccomend "Geddie". I am writing this letter because I felt you needed to know how much I appreciate you guys. You made a beg impact on my life and I just want to say thanks, you tought me things I probalt would never learnt.

Thank you very much

Lots of love

Your Camper

Annielle (age 12)

I believe one of the most unsung and at times unrecognized programs of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is our Camping program. There are Synod Camps coast to coast, as well as presbytery or congregational Camps. These are enterprises run by our various churches, through very dedicated members, mostly volunteers who work on the various boards and committees that make up the varied camp structures and facilitate the smooth operation of the program. In a year when we are highlighting education in the church it is helpful to acknowledge one of the most successful modes of Christian education and leadership development that we have.

The philosophy that underlines our camping ministry is one that:

- promotes a Christian community in action
- promotes growth in Christian faith and living
- provides a place to gain a broader understanding of God at work in His world

- provides ways for campers to know Christ as the living word of God
- encourages a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
- encourages the dedication of all life to the claims of God

Church camping is a different kind of camping, in that the focus is on God as the centre of all life, and the focal point of every day's activities.

Some of these activities are:

- sharing and learning from each other
- expressing thoughts and deep feelings, not only about our faith, but also about each other; this creates a kind of fellowship, the same kind that Christ created with his disciples
- a closeness achieved through community with Christ which is a totally different closeness from that experienced apart from Christ. The natural sur-

roundings of the outdoors seem to be the catalyst for this deep-rooted fellowship, which happens when conditions are working in harmony with each other.

The development of Christian faith and character through living together in a camp community and the furthering of our church Christian Education program is then carried back to individual congregations by campers and staff in the form of an on-going service in the name of Jesus Christ.

Christian camping is special because:

1. It provides the opportunity to see life just a little differently than we do every day. When you are very young, it is the opportunity to prove to yourself, your parents and maybe even to others that you can make it on your own, albeit in a very protected environment. This is a very important achievement. As a counsellor you have the challenge to test your skills and mature into a well-rounded and mature leader. For many campers who come from challenging communities and home environments, it is the one week when you are able to live in an affirming climate and you learn how to sustain yourself as a person. In the constant but often non-intrusiveness of this faith community you experience a real sense of the presence of God.
2. A Unique Christian Community is born and sustained during the extent of the time together. A community of sharing, a common task, with genuine growth in faith. It is not perfectly manifested, nor is it without its own blemishes but the call together of the community in Christ's name and for Christ's purpose is sufficient to make

## Resources

To learn more about the camps in your synod or presbytery go to <http://presbycan.ca/youth/camping.html>



it a meaningful and worthwhile experience. The camp community is bonded in its primary tasks, which allows for time for relaxation, recreation, joy, and, yes, just plain fun while fulfilling its purpose.

3. All kinds of skills and learning are enhanced at camp. This is a twenty-four-seven experience. Your basic human skills of encouraging and enjoying each other's faith and talents will be paramount. One learns the most when teaching others, the camp is in no way a formal classroom but

it is always a place to teach others, and to be taught in return. The shy reserved member gains the confidence to be bolder and to speak out. The extrovert learns to be still and to hear the voices of others. The person afraid of the woods relishes the hand of God that can be found in this part of the natural world.

4. Specific teaching and learning skills are all there, in a very positive framework. At Camp Geddie, and I believe at a number of our other camps, for the past four years our summer curriculum choice has been Christian Resources For The Outdoors published by the Christian Board of Publications and the United Methodist Publishing House on behalf of the Cooperative Publication Association. Each year there is a specific theme for the summer (in 2004 the theme was Join The Party developed out of bible passages. On the surface seemingly quite traditional. In actual presentation it allows for a variety of approaches and ways to present the general and daily themes. The Camp

Geddie experience enhanced the approach by not limiting the teaching to the traditional discovery time but also to other convenient moments in the day. Beginning with the morning promo at the outside gazebo and often ending with a dramatic re-enactment at the concluding chapel of the day. Every opportunity was taken to not only talk the lesson but also act and live it. Eventually most of the seven intelligence preferences would find manifestation in one form or another. Both words and actions (in the woods, at the beach, in the craft hall and, yes, even washing dishes) become opportunities for impromptu learning.

Among the many things I continue to learn while being involved directly in a camping ministry is the changes and differences in words and language between a younger and a not so young person. In 2003 around the second or third week of the season I engaged in one of my usual short conversations with one of the campers. I eventually asked how he was enjoying his time with us as this was the first time he came to camp. When I indicated that it might not be a good experience for him he said, "oh no, the camp is wicked". I was taken aback a bit because I did not think wickedness was what we were all about. When I related the story to some of the counsellors they assured me that something being "wicked" in 2003 to a young camper was indeed positive, a great affirmation of a great time, a good program and something that the young person would indeed wish to repeat. Needless to say, promoting our camp as a 'wicked' place for young people to come, has not found a central place in our promotional literature. That which is central is the caring, loving and learning place our camp becomes for all who experience it and our sincere desire to continue this vital educational ministry. **R**

Rev. Dr. Donald W. MacKay is Interim Executive Director of Camp Geddie and Synod Staff Person with the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces.

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Dr. Stan Walters

**March 9th - "A WORD OF LONELINESS"**

Dr. Rick Horst

**March 16th - "A WORD OF SUFFERING"**

Dr. Charles Fensham

### Holy Week schedule:

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Dr. George C. Vais

**March 22nd - "A WORD OF COMMITMENT"**

Dr. Iain Nicol

**March 23rd - "A WORD OF WARNING"**

Dr. Cameron Brett

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# I now pronounce you ... still confused

*The Supreme Court's decision won't clear up the murky issue of same-sex marriage*

**T**he Supreme Court opinion on gay marriage delivered in December is only one chapter in the long history of the issue in this country. Fundamental arguments aside, what is so surprising is how self-congratulatory people have been because the ruling claims to respect freedom of religion. In other words, we have been assured that clergy who refuse to marry gay couples will not face pressure or prosecution.

Perhaps. But the legal history of the gay movement indicates a different scenario. A spokesman for Justice Minister Irwin Cotler was disarmingly frank when he said that the issue was not decided and that the courts will rule on a "case-by-case basis." When asked if the Supreme Court could give "a meaningful opinion" on whether the promise of freedom of religion will be respected, he admitted it would be difficult to give any concrete answers.

Some of us have known this for a long time.

Last year, I interviewed one of the leaders of the campaign for gay marriage. He was explicit. "I don't think any priest or minister should be forced to marry gay people, but I do think that if they refuse to do so there should be certain consequences. They're not observing the spirit, if not the law, of the land and as such we should challenge their charitable tax status. Why should they receive tax breaks if they refuse to marry gay couples?" I reminded him of the number of poor and needy people helped and fed by the churches. He had obviously thought through his position. "We'd exempt the kitchens and public parts of the churches, but remove the charitable status from the rest of the building."

If this sounds extreme, recall the case of Mark Hall, the young man who wanted



**A spokesperson for Justice Minister Irwin Cotler (above) said it would be difficult to give concrete answers about whether freedom of religion will be respected for clergy who refuse to marry same-sex couples.**

to take his homosexual partner to a prom at a Catholic school. In a hurried judgment, the court declared that the school had no choice and had to accept the student and his friend at the dance. That case was indicative of what will almost certainly happen in the coming months and years concerning churches and gay marriage. Homosexual activists and lawyers, high-ranking politicians who were gay and a liberal media that was sympathetic to the homosexual community all pounced on the school, the Church and the court.

Those who opposed the young man bringing his partner to the prom were caricatured as bigots and hateful fools, and lies of an almost racist nature were told about Catholic teaching. A young man from the Catholic Civil Rights League who attended one of the hearings told me he had to face "physical intimidation" when he made his case.

The court's decision was based on public funding of Catholic schools. In

other words, because the school received tax dollars it had to do what it was told. Those tax dollars, of course, come from Catholic parents, who are not allowed to direct their money to private faith-based schools.

So if a school has to act thus, what makes a church that receives financial help from its charitable status in any way different? This takes us back to the candour of the justice minister's spokesman and the determination of one of the leaders of the campaign for gay marriage.

I am convinced that many members of the gay community would defend the right of a church, mosque or synagogue to refuse to marry gay couples. I am also convinced, however, that there are others in that community who will challenge these bodies at the first opportunity.

Yet there are other issues. The rights of children, the future of a balanced society, the role of men and women and mothers and fathers, the nature of a healthy sexuality, the causes of homosexuality and many more. Avenues of debate around these issues have been closed to us because of an extensive campaign in the media, the entertainment industry, the courts and education to marginalize and even silence those who question the gay community and its aspirations.

That is so very sad. For honesty, for freedom and for Christianity. Please visit [www.marriageinstitute.ca](http://www.marriageinstitute.ca) for another voice. And please know that there are many intelligent and compassionate people who will not merely bow their heads and accept what they believe to be wrong. ■

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Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# Strengthening remote ministries

*Presbytery of Brandon*

by Amy MacLachlan

A congregation without a minister is sometimes just what the doctor ordered. For St. Andrew's, Flin Flon (in northern Manitoba and an eight-hour drive from Brandon), this was just the case. Four years with an empty pulpit motivated them to address the general lack of support for rural and remote ministries. They soon realized their situation was not unique among rural congregations (six of the 14 charges in the presbytery are without a minister), and were convinced rural and remote ministries have a low profile in the life of the national church.

The church asked itself similar questions in the 1980s, sparked by a discussion paper from the Board of World Mission on rural ministry. The report affirmed that rural and remote congregations are vital to the church as a whole, and asked how they can be made "more effective, more prophetic, more satisfying and more productive." It also said the church does "not have a clear sense of mission with regard to rural and remote areas...we focus a great deal of our time, energy and money on areas of high population growth, while rural or remote congregations with legitimate ministries fall by the wayside or close."

In response to these words, an idea was raised at a congregational meeting at St. Andrew's in 1999. The congregation (with presbytery's support) embraced the report's reminder that "leadership for rural ministry must come from rural people." A proposal for the Flin Flon Centre for Excellence in Rural and Remote Ministries was born the following year. The attention given to this project by the Presbytery of Brandon (located primarily in southwestern Manitoba), stems from the fact that only three ministers serve urban



**Knox Church, Neepawa, Manitoba.**

congregations — all of whom have also served in smaller settings.

The institute provides a place for research and study on rural and remote ministries, training and resources for lay people and elders, and specific training for clergy newly called to rural congregations. A fourth purpose, establishing courses, creating resources and developing workshops through distance education and on-site training, is supported by the Elder's Institute at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver.

The three-year pilot project wrapped up in January. Rev. Ina Golaiy, minister at

St. Andrew's, is now assessing the results. She said student reaction has been positive, and the interest from other presbyteries and St. Andrew's Hall is encouraging. "Things are happening in recognition of the need for awareness, and as far as I'm concerned, that's awesome!"

As the congregation at St. Andrew's discovered, the challenges in Flin Flon are repeated across Canada's prairies. Their stories call to mind days of old, when early settlers to western provinces struggled to tame a wild and unforgiving landscape. Despite difficulties, the church continues.



**The Stone Angel in Neepawa's Riverside Cemetery inspired the title and opening lines of Margaret Laurence's book.**

Fittingly so, the presbytery's history has a decidedly rural feel, marked by quaint stories, proud traditions and toiling through troubled times. The presbytery was established in 1884, due to the expansion of the national church in western Canada. It is home to two national heritage sites — Knox Church, Neepawa, and Bellafield Church. The first Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Neepawa (meaning abundance, or place of plenty, in Cree) in 1877. Built in 1891, Knox is a rare example of Romanesque Revival architecture in Manitoba, and is famous for its acoustics. Neepawa itself is known as the hometown of celebrated Canadian writer, Margaret Laurence, author of *The Stone Angel*, among others.

About an hour's drive from Brandon, Bellafield Church was built in 1890. The original stone church was rebuilt with wood in 1906. As the first settlers to the area spoke only Gaelic, the original building came to be called the "Gaelic Church", and services were conducted in that language until 1935.

To honour its roots, a special service is held every summer. "Kirkin' O' The Tartan" commemorates the Battle of Culloden in 1745, when Gaelic and Scottish symbols were banned, including the kilt, the tartan and the bagpipes. Determined to carry on their traditions,

Highlands clansmen held secret church services incorporating these elements. Today, in addition to the prayers, hymns, and benediction of the original service, there is a reading in Gaelic, a calling of the clans and a blessing of the tartans, and a lament on the bagpipes.

Although the presbytery is often challenged by a lack of ministers at its service, the lives of some of its ministers provide an interesting backdrop to the prairie landscape. Rev. Lloyd Henderson arrived in Portage la Prairie in 1943 and led First Presbyterian until his retirement in 1981. He was named minister emeritus for his long dedication. Involved in community groups and charitable organizations, he served as mayor for 22 years, and ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party of Canada (against Lester B. Pearson and Pierre Trudeau).

Knox Zion, Carberry, relied on lay ministers for four years. In Jan. 2004, the post was filled when Rev. Heinrich Grosskopf arrived in cold and blustery Winnipeg with his family — all the way from sunny South Africa.

With five female ministers, and three male, the presbytery seems to have a penchant for attracting women to its frontiers. The current head count pales in comparison to 10 years ago, when Rev. Dale Woods came to First Church, Brandon. At that time, he was the only male minister in the presbytery.

Melita Church opened in 1892. Two years earlier, the town consisted of a store, a post office, blacksmith shop, livery stable, a doctor, a school and three houses. The congregation voted to remain Presbyterian in 1925, after which the church enjoyed its largest numbers. The congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary in June 1992 — a significant milestone considering the church began as a mission back in 1883, where sermons were preached in a canvas-covered room with dirt floors.

The attraction of rural churches lies with its people. "I find in rural and remote charges, you are a minister to the whole community," said Golaiy. "You have your congregation, but everyone gets to know you and seeks you out for spiritual direction. You become a community minister, and you can be very connected with the people." **R**



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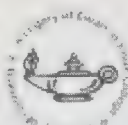
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## Celebrate Black History Month

*"...as be wise"  
An African saying*



Knox College is delighted to welcome  
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Scholar-in-Residence for February in  
celebration of Black History in the  
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Church in Canada.

Mr. Cowan is minister at Meadowbrook United Church in  
Kingston, Jamaica and the Moderator of the United Church  
of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Both locally and  
internationally, he works for economic justice and  
challenges all that undermines the possibility for people to  
live in dignity as God's beloved children.

Throughout February at Knox, he will meet with  
students and clergy and be available for conversation and  
discussion forums. Look for upcoming details.

For more information contact Emily Rodgers

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*Moderator of the Church of Scotland*

Monday, March 7, 2005

*Everyone welcome!*



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Co-sponsored by St. Andrew's Church, Toronto and Knox College

# Searching for the faith in faith books

*Big box theology on the bookshelf*

by Andrew Faiz

Each week, the *Record* receives review copies of faith books from publishers. Each book is a theological argument, aimed at a particular market of comfortable North American Christians. I have chosen a few books from this overflowing inbox that seem to me to express a similar brand of middle-class suburban big box theology. They are not well written or compellingly intelligent, but they do provide a curious sociological insight. This is the face, largely, of Christianity today on our continent.

*It's Better to Build Boys than Mend Men*, S. Truett Cathy.

Cathy is a successful businessman, with over 1,000 chicken restaurants in the United States. He believes that “children all around us are growing up without strong positive guidance from their parents, who are busy, distracted, absent, or who choose to be buddies instead of parents to their children”. I’m not sure I agree, but Cathy is wealthier than I am. He believes the world is falling apart and he spends a lot of his money mending the cracks.

A sample of his wisdom:

“Here are a few ways parents multiply a child’s lack of common sense:

- Give him a weekly allowance.
- Give her a brand new car when she turns sixteen.
- Protect him from the consequences of his bad decisions.”

Which leaves me wondering, why is it she gets the car, and he only an allowance?

*The Power of Faithful Focus — a Practical Christian Guide to Spiritual & Personal Abundance*, Les Hewitt and Dr. Charlie Self.

“Can you imagine going through life hating your purpose — grinding your teeth every morning and proclaiming, ‘Oh no, not another day serving God with my unique talents!’ “ This is a sequel to Les Hewitt’s *The Power of Focus*. Though they don’t say it overtly, the authors are talking about money — it is your Godly obligation to be wealthy, to be prosperous, and to thank Christ for your wealth. Many of their examples are about business people: “As these words are being written, Brett and Lyn are in South Africa with ten Christian business leaders, consulting... about how to do business Christ’s way.” It’s all about money and Christ — as a Presbyterian you may never have seen these words in the same sentence, but here they are. Or as the authors like to say: “God wants me to thrive, not just survive!” (The exclamation point is theirs!)

*Entrepreneurial Faith — Launching Bold Initiatives to Expand God’s Kingdom*, by Kirbyjon Caldwell and Walt Kallestad.

I’m not making this stuff up. Here’s a quote from the opening chapter: “Jesus of Nazareth was, and is, the Ultimate Entrepreneur... We believe entrepreneurship is about seeing, sizing and seizing opportunities... At the time Jesus began His entrepreneurial ministry, Jewish society was held captive by Roman oppression... [B]ut being an entrepreneur Jesus couldn’t help but turn the system on its head.” In other words, to be Christ-like means to be bold, make money and do good.

*The Beautiful Balance for Body and Soul*, by Cynthia Culp Allen and Charity Allen Winters.

I have been gulping this book down the way one does that sickly sweet super-



market pop, knowing it’s awful but unable to resist the sap. Mother and daughter are both faithful Christians and models. Here, they bring it all together. “The man was formed [by God], but woman was fashioned... Can you imagine the almighty Creator lovingly, gently fashioning the first woman — molding her curves, coaxing curls into long locks, stroking a blush across velvety cheeks...” (Let’s stop for a cold shower, and return for more.)

“A Christlike Christian is wonderful, no matter what she looks like. But a sharp-looking Christian, with godly character and a confident smile, is dynamite! When you develop into the beautiful, godly woman that God created you to be — watch out, world!”

Yes, world, watch out. **R**

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway Community Church in Toronto. You can contact him at [afaiz@presbyterian.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterian.ca).



# First signs of spring

*An avian messenger announces Lent*

by David Webber

It's February 2 and I know spring is just around the corner. No, it is not what that Yankee rodent Punxsutawney Phil nor that Ontario hairy-tailed rat Wiarton Willie saw today. Who could possibly predict weather on the basis of what a myopic, eastern earth rat saw or didn't see on February 2? They would probably lie about it anyway. Out west, we rely on the one sure thing that there is to predict spring: the Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*), a small, grey bird.

Today, in spite of snowbanks that are three-feet high, ice on the lake that is three-feet deep and a three-hour snow-storm last night, I know that spring is just around the corner because when I came home from the post office I heard "peeeweee, peeeweee, peeeweee" lilting through the bright sunny winter air. I know without a doubt that the new life of spring is just around the corner.

The plaintiff early morning cry of the Western Wood-Pewee is burned into my memory from childhood. Back then, winter came early to the mountains and we welcomed it with relish. Usually we were locked into winter by the end of October each year. We didn't have TV or the plethora of electronic "distractions" that kids have today, which meant that all our winter occupations were self-generated. Winter was the best of times and the worst of times. There was so much to do in winter: pond hockey 'til you couldn't feel your feet; snowshoe treks 'til you were spent in a pool of sweat; death-defying toboggan runs 'til you couldn't hold your water; cross-country ski marches 'til you nearly dropped off the edge of the earth.



And then, about mid-January, winter would turn real nasty, jailing us indoors with temperatures as low as 50 below Fahrenheit. That's when I can remember scratching the layers of Jack Frost's work from my single-pane bedroom window, feeling the pain of forced inactivity and wistfully wishing spring would come. Yesterday. And it would come, usually with the blast of a Chinook wind off the Rocky Mountains, instantly breaking winter's back in a single blow. The day after a Chinook, the sun would always rise warm with the morning, and seemingly from out of nowhere. Early on that first morning of winter's breaking, I would lie in bed and hear the almost indiscernible, "peeeweee, peeeweee, peeeweee". And even though I was only eight, and even though I could hardly hear it, and even though it was techni-

cally still winter, I knew absolutely for sure that Spring was right around the corner. Spring was so close I could almost taste it. I would lay back, close my eyes, listen to that oh-so-quiet avian first sign of spring and dream of bass fishing, pond rafting, slew swimming and a whole host of spring wildlife adventures that I couldn't wait to get into in the season of new life.

The Christian season of Lent is about to be launched as I write this essay. I have to confess that I usually struggle a lot with the season of Lent. As a kid, my best friend was Roman Catholic and Lent was the season of what he had to give up. Not being a Roman Catholic myself and being pretty much non-religious, giving up something you really liked as a display of guilt made absolutely no sense to me. Even to my eight-year-old sensitivities it

seemed just an irrational ritual. I had no idea that as an eight-year-old pagan I was in agreement with the great Christian reformer John Calvin who called this religious giving-up-of-stuff before Easter "...the superstitious observance of Lent."

Yes, I have since studied my church history and learned that Lent, among Christians, was originally the period of baptismal preparation, later of public penance, finally becoming a forty-day devotional preparation for Easter, traditionally based on Jesus' wilderness fast in Mark 1:13. But you know what? That knowledge doesn't help a bit. And if you garnish Lent with Shrove Tuesday's pancake supper to rid the cupboards of leaven, and if you add to it Ash Wednesday's imposition of ashes to demonstrate serious penance, and abstain from your favorite little bit of food or drink for 40 days to demonstrate God knows what else as you prepare for Easter, Lent still seems to me to border upon ritualistic works righteousness. In its religious clothes, Lent has too much baggage.

But what happens if Lent is more like the Western Wood-Pewee? What hap-

pens if it is like lying in bed on an early, sunny, not-quite-spring morning after a frigid, long winter nightmare followed by the blast of a Chinook from the mountains and you hear the plaintiff oh-so-quiet "peeeeweeeee, peeeeweeeee, peeeeweeeee"? And right then, you know that without a doubt new life is staring

## What is that sound?

### Could it be God active in the silliness of our lives?

you in the face. What happens if that is Lent? What happens if it is about being sensitized to all that is going on around you, all the silliness in your own life and the nonsense in other people's lives, and all the pain and suffering and death that is the evidence of life locked in, pressed down and distorted with sin? And you say, "But wait a minute, what is that quiet sound?" Could it be the sound of God active in the silliness, and nonsense, and sin's death lock on life, working to bring out new life? Could it be that Lent is the precursor, a period of being sensi-

tized to the quiet sound of the power of the cross to defeat all that steals life?

For me this year, thanks to the Western Wood-Pewee, Lent has become the anticipation of the great celebration of Easter. Lent has become Easter's Advent and I embrace it with relish. All around me spring is, or is about to, break in and in my innards Easter is about to wash all over my spirit. New life is in the process of birthing all around me and within me. Hallelujah! What a creator-redeemer-sustainer God!

**Author's note:** *lent* \ noun [Middle English *lente* springtime, Lent, from Old English *lencten*; akin to Old High German *lenzin* spring] (13th century): the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter observed by Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and some Protestant churches as a period of penitence and fasting. **R**

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.



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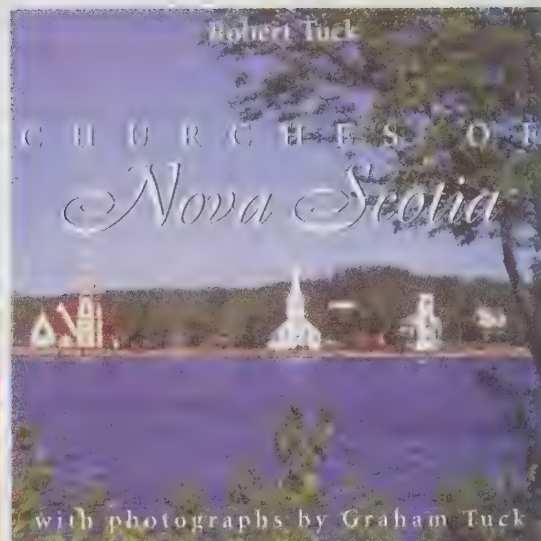
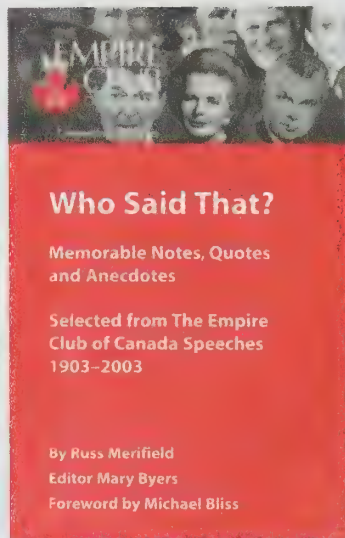
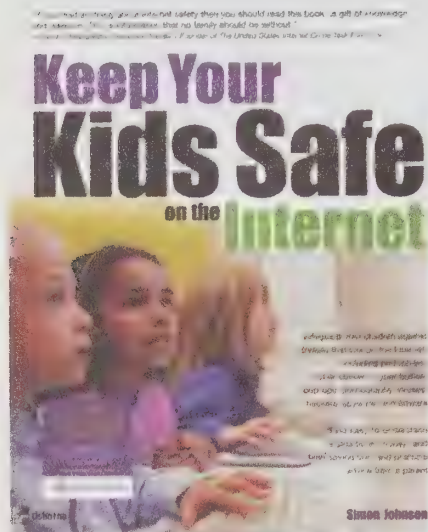
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**Keep Your Kids Safe on the Internet**, by Simon Johnson. McGraw Hill/Osborne.

It's either a good world with bad people, or a bad world with good people, but either way, apparently, our children are in danger. While the 'net is a great resource in every home, filled with knowledge, experience, games and other joys, it also harbours a dark side. If you accept the thesis that there is a conspiracy of pornographers, abusers, and others of evil intent searching out your children then this is the book for you. It's a hands-on, well-illustrated guide through programs both malevolent and helpful. If you feel incompetent in front of a computer screen, this book will take you by the hand and guide you step-by-step through a variety of security processes. But, don't be fooled. If your child — young or old — is eager to find some naughty pictures or talk on chat lines, nothing in this book will keep her from reaching her goal. You might just be forced into relying upon some old fashioned — and generally lacking in support manuals — parenting. *AF*

**Who Said That? Memorable notes, quotes and anecdotes, selected from The Empire Club of Canada Speeches, 1903-2003**, by Russ Merifield, edited by Mary Byers. The Empire Club Foundation.

Everything that needs to be said, has already been said, and chances are it was said at the Empire Club. Faithful Presbyterian Russ Merifield has pored over a century of talk to unearth an anecdotal history of our times. Here's Sir Sandford Fleming speaking in 1904 about the then cutting-edge cable technology: "The score of Australia's cricket champions, at the close of their first innings, handed in at the Sydney office at 2:40, was delivered in London at precisely 2:43.5... Imagine transmitting a message around the circumference of the globe — 15,000 miles in 3.5 minutes!" Ninety-two years later Bill Gates stood at the same dais and imagined: "Not just a computer on every desk and in every home — but rather that people have computers in their pockets, computers in their cars..." These two quotations sit 289 pages apart; a wonder so much information can be squeezed into so little space. Who ever said talk is cheap had no idea what they were chattering about. *AF*

**Churches of Nova Scotia**, by Robert Tuck, with photographs by Graham Tuck. The Dundurn Group.

The text is subtle and sly. "A capable performer in the pulpit has always been highly prized at Fort Massey." This is the sort of specific and local history only a native son can produce. Robert Tuck hides neither his life long knowledge of nor his love for his native land. And, he leads with wit. Of another church he writes, "Lucy Maud Montgomery eloquently expressed the feelings...about church union when she said, 'From all points of view, I think it is a tragic blunder. The stately Presbyterian Church, with its noble history and inspiring traditions, has been forced to commit Suicide.'" Ah history, the sting is still alive. The photographs are nice but the printing is disappointing, done more for economics than for aesthetics. The paper is thin, the colours are flat, but the writing is lively. *AF*

**The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, Vol. V: 1935-1942**, edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, 2004. Reviewed by John McTavish.

Almost 100 years after the publication of her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, Lucy Maud Montgomery remains the most popular Canadian novelist on the horizon. No storyteller has won more hearts than the unpretentious Presbyterian minister's wife from Cavendish, P.E.I.

Four volumes of the author's journals have been released over the past 20 years. The fifth, covering Montgomery's life from 1935 to her death in 1942, has finally been published. While her talent shines in novels, it also manifests itself in these journals. The prose is like a clean window pane through which her readers can see things exactly as they were for Montgomery.

And what a mess her life is from the moment she enters the west Toronto stone house purchased in retirement.

Her husband, suffering for years from a mental illness, is oblivious to

everything about his wife — from her birthday to her success as a writer. Montgomery's eldest son secretly marries a girl from their former church in Norval, Ont. He fathers two children and then carries on an affair with a woman from the Toronto Presbyterian church that the family attends. The maids drive Montgomery crazy with their mood swings, and even the cats aren't friendly, except for 'Lucky' who dies on her.

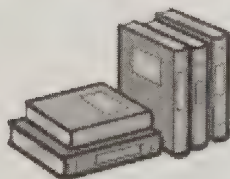
Through it all, Montgomery tries to maintain a normal existence. She joins her fellow scribblers at the Women's Press Club. She sees the latest movie at the Runnymede theatre. The neighbours are invited in for a game of euchre. When a friend at her Study Club confesses that they were initially "frightened" of her, Montgomery confides in her journal, "How silly to think that, just because a woman has written a few successful books, she is an awe-inspiring creature with whom people cannot feel really comfortable!!"

Montgomery emerges from these journals as an ordinary person who just happens to possess a literary genius. However, her own ending isn't as inspiring as those she wrote. Though she never appears to be seriously ill during the last years of her life, Montgomery — like Matthew Cuthbert — dies in her 60s from a weak heart. The strain, it would appear, is simply too much.

Her final journal entry, registered a month before her death on Apr. 24, 1942, is a far cry from the buoyant spirits that gave birth to the red-haired orphan that lit up the lives of Matthew and Marilla and made Montgomery such a beloved author: "Since then my life has been hell, hell, hell. My mind is gone — everything in the world I lived for has gone — the world has gone mad. I shall be driven to end my life. Oh God, forgive me. No-body dreams what my awful position is."

John McTavish is a retired United Church minister. A fan of L.M. Montgomery, he lives in Huntsville, Ont.

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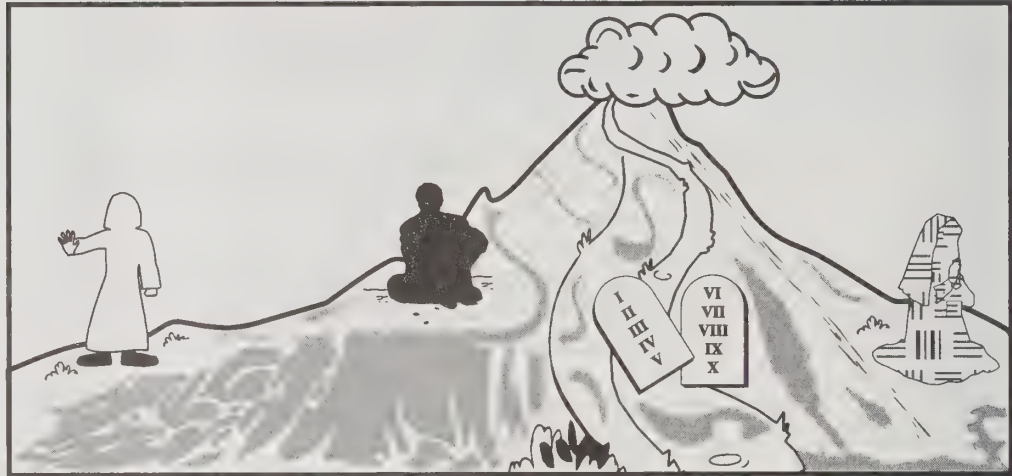
# called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

## On the Mountain

### Find the Five Differences

These pictures look alike, but look again. Can you find 5 places where they are different?



Match up these five mountain stories with the five "different" images you find in the picture and with the Bible passages:

- |                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Exodus 34: 1-6  | a) Jesus prays alone        |
| (2) Matthew 4: 8-11 | b) Jesus resists temptation |
| (3) Matthew 5: 1-12 | c) a set of rules           |
| (4) Mark 6: 41-46   | d) transfiguration          |
| (5) Luke 9: 28-36   | e) Jesus sits to teach      |

### PRAYER

**I will not fear  
for God is near.  
Through the dark night  
as in the light.  
Amen.**

You will find more learning activities online at:  
[www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html](http://www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html)

Answers on page 49

# Help! We're breaking out in teenagers!

*Advice from a weak parent, strong in faith*

**T**welve years ago, I began writing a column called "Family Matters" for a popular magazine. It was a rather daunting task for a young father. One night, as the deadline loomed, I told my wife Ramona about the stress of it all. "I can't do it," I stammered. "Look at me. I'm an imperfect father. I get mad at my kids. I slid hamsters down banisters when I was a child. I argue with my wife sometimes."

She laughed. "So write about it," she said. "Tell stories. Tell us you feel like a failure sometimes. And tell us there's hope."

"But I'm no Dr. Dobson," I explained. "I know," she replied. "He has money."

**'You think diapers are bad, you just wait. Soon they'll wanna date and drive your car'**

The next day, I sat at my desk, wondering what to write. The job was too big for me, so I pushed my chair back and got on my knees to pray. Then I wrote "Shotgun Memories", the story of a hunting trip gone right. With five children and a To Do list taller than me, Dad somehow managed to throw a shotgun into our '62 Meteor and invest a Saturday in his youngest son. A decade later, he handed the same shotgun to a farmer, trading it in on my very first car.

Animal rights activists got hold of the article and twisted it. Letters began arriving — mostly kind ones. The farmer even called. "Phil," he drawled, "I want you to have that shotgun." I thanked him repeatedly. "How does 200 bucks sound?" he asked. "Not very good," I

said. We hardly had two quarters to rub together. Where would I ever come up with 200 bucks?

Our children were three, two and almost one at the time. They came with no instruction manuals, no mute buttons, and no guarantees. To make matters worse, cloudy-faced parents began warning us. "You think diapers are bad," they said, "you just wait. Soon they'll wanna date and drive your car." We were scared, so we opened the Bible and got on our knees. A surprising thing happened. We



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found that we loved parenting. Sure, the children screamed and put jam in the VCR and turned eating into a full contact sport. But we loved these precious, sticky-faced gifts. We held them tightly, read to them often, and gave them back to God each night.

Those days are gone. In one month, we will have three teenagers. We will need more money. The other day in the grocery store, someone said, "You think it's bad now, you just wait 'til they're in their twenties." And I replied, "No, I'm not going to wait. I'm going to live today and savour the things I can."

If the truth be known, we're enjoying our children more than ever. I'm not saying it's all easy. I haven't been able to use the phone in weeks. My daughter's ear is stuck to it. Last week, my son mentioned that he was thinking of getting an earring. I told him that was quite a coincidence because I was thinking of getting all my pants hemmed just below the knees. And buying a T-shirt that said, "I'm Jeffrey Callaway's dad." He laughed so hard he forgot about the earring.

I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I'm learning that good parents change and adapt and listen more than lecture. That supertime and bedtime can be more significant in a child's upbringing than school and sports — even church.

A 30-year-old couple told me recently that they were finally ready for children. They had enough money now. They had all the right books and videos and teaching tapes. I asked if they were weak enough to be the kind of parents God can use. They frowned. I told them to open God's Word and get on their knees. That God makes the best things out of the softest clay. That nothing worthwhile I've ever accomplished didn't initially scare me half to death.

I told them about a shotgun that hangs above my study door now, a lifelong reminder that the best retirement investment is memories. And I told them about the very first article I ever wrote. I sold it to another magazine for 200 bucks. ☐

Phil Callaway is a popular speaker and the best-selling author of a dozen books, including *Who Put My Life on Fast Forward?* (Harvest House). His new adventure series for kids is available at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

# obituaries

**Dugald, Stirling**, member of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, ON, passed away on Friday, November 5, 2004 in his 74th year.

**Edgar, Helen**, 92, died Nov. 24, 2004. A long-time member and representative elder for St. Andrew's, Kamloops, BC.

**Howden, Thomas**, 90, died June 19, 2004. A long time adherent of Caledonia Presbyterian Church, Caledonia, ON.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST. **Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.**

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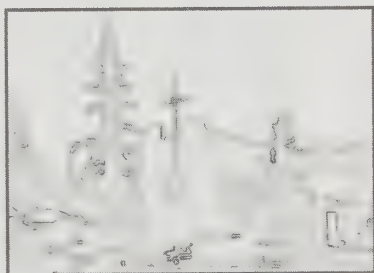
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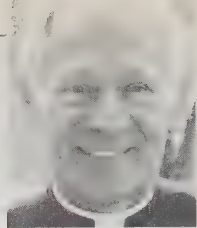
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# The Nigeria Factor

*A new twist on an old truth*

When Nigerians gather, whether within their own country or in the diaspora, one expression will inevitably be brought up — “the Nigeria Factor”. Self-deprecating and all inclusive, it is national “in-house” language or code. All Nigerians know what is intended, but they struggle to define it.

I returned to Nigeria this past August to represent The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria when they marked the fiftieth anniversary of our partnership. In many conversations, I asked what “Nigeria Factor” meant.

One church member said it means “life lived to the full. Everything done to the extreme.” A woman added: “It is nothing that should be written down.” Another friend contributed that “it is nothing we should be proud of.”

My taxi driver defined the “Nigeria Factor” as the following: “It refers to the extra sources of income because of corruption in our country. It is the African way. When someone does something for you, you show appreciation. But it is mandatory. It’s a financial incentive. A person’s salary is not enough for a person to survive. Dash is the factor.”

One friend explained that it is an ambiguous phrase, but offered the example of people coming to work late, or not coming at all, and yet expecting more benefits. “It’s when a person uses their position for personal advancement.” She added that “the Nigeria Factor is embedded in the concept that the state does not exist. People only work for themselves — this includes civil servants. The state is an object of plunder.”

It is the notion that anything can be sorted out, said yet another person. “It is the factor of power. The big man gets things done. No one says ‘no’ to the big

man. Everyone aspires to be a big man,” he said. “People do not expect systems to function. In truth, most systems are not working — telephone, electricity, transportation — so this is the way to work around the systems. The Nigeria Factor is simply the belief that anything is possible.”

One man in government service stated that “the Nigeria Factor means we Nigerians will do things our own way. We

**Nigeria, with 345 major language groups and 1,500 subgroups, has learned much about cultural diversity, tolerance and acceptance. We stand to learn a lot from the Nigeria Factor**

know it is not always right, nor easy, nor proper, but that is who we are and how we live our lives.”

As our two churches mark 50 years of a partnership that has seen solidarity through a civil war, mutual exchanges of personnel, challenges in development, relief and inter-church relations, I believe the concept of the “Nigeria Factor” should be revisited.

The Nigeria Factor can be bent to the will of Christ and be of benefit to Christ’s church worldwide. Roughly half of the 133 million Nigerians are Christian. Nigerians are a deeply religious people. They are a people of indomitable will, industry, drive, strength and adaptability. Their faith is natural and effusive. They are confident and proud. Religion is part and parcel of every aspect of life — market, office, school and home. Their natural spontaneous Christianity can make a strategic contribution to Christ’s church.

The Nigeria Factor under Christ should contribute to the recognition that theirs is a complex nation in a complex world. While the numerical growth of the Nigerian church is remarkable, it has also spawned an incredible array of wholly independent, answer-to-no-one ministries. Everyone agrees that “religion” is the largest “business” second only to the oil industry. An acknowledgement of the scandal of the commercialization of Christianity and the crass importation of freewheeling ways into Christ’s church would aid in church unity.

The Nigeria Factor could also make a positive contribution to the world’s present journey of discovery of the dynamics between Islam and Christianity. Within Nigeria, these two faiths have been living side by side for hundreds of years. World history has studied few examples of coexistence (peaceful or otherwise). Nigeria has a story to tell. They’ve learned tough lessons which they could share. The world can only benefit.

The inventiveness and zeal of the Nigeria Factor could also be a source of renewed joy and spirit in Christian

## Moderator’s itinerary

### February 2 & 5

APCE, Vancouver, BC

### February 3 & 4

Visiting the Presbytery of Vancouver Island and St. Andrew’s Hall, Vancouver, BC

### February 6

St. Andrew’s, Kimberley, BC

### February 12 & 13

HIV/AIDS fundraiser and worship  
St. Andrew’s, Ottawa, ON

### February 27

Presbytery event and worship  
First, Brandon, MB

### February 28

Presbytery of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB



worship around the world. However, while most Nigerian church services, even in mainline protestant churches, would today be described as charismatic or Pentecostal in style, it is vital for Nigerian Reformed Christians to ensure that a biblically based foundation on the Word of God is strengthened. "Prosperity theology", which is so popular amongst people of struggling economies, has taken a firm hold on the country. This plays into the hands of the original, less than desirable Nigeria Factor. Nigerian Presbyterians can contribute to an African theology which addresses the travails of the continent while offering hope to individuals.

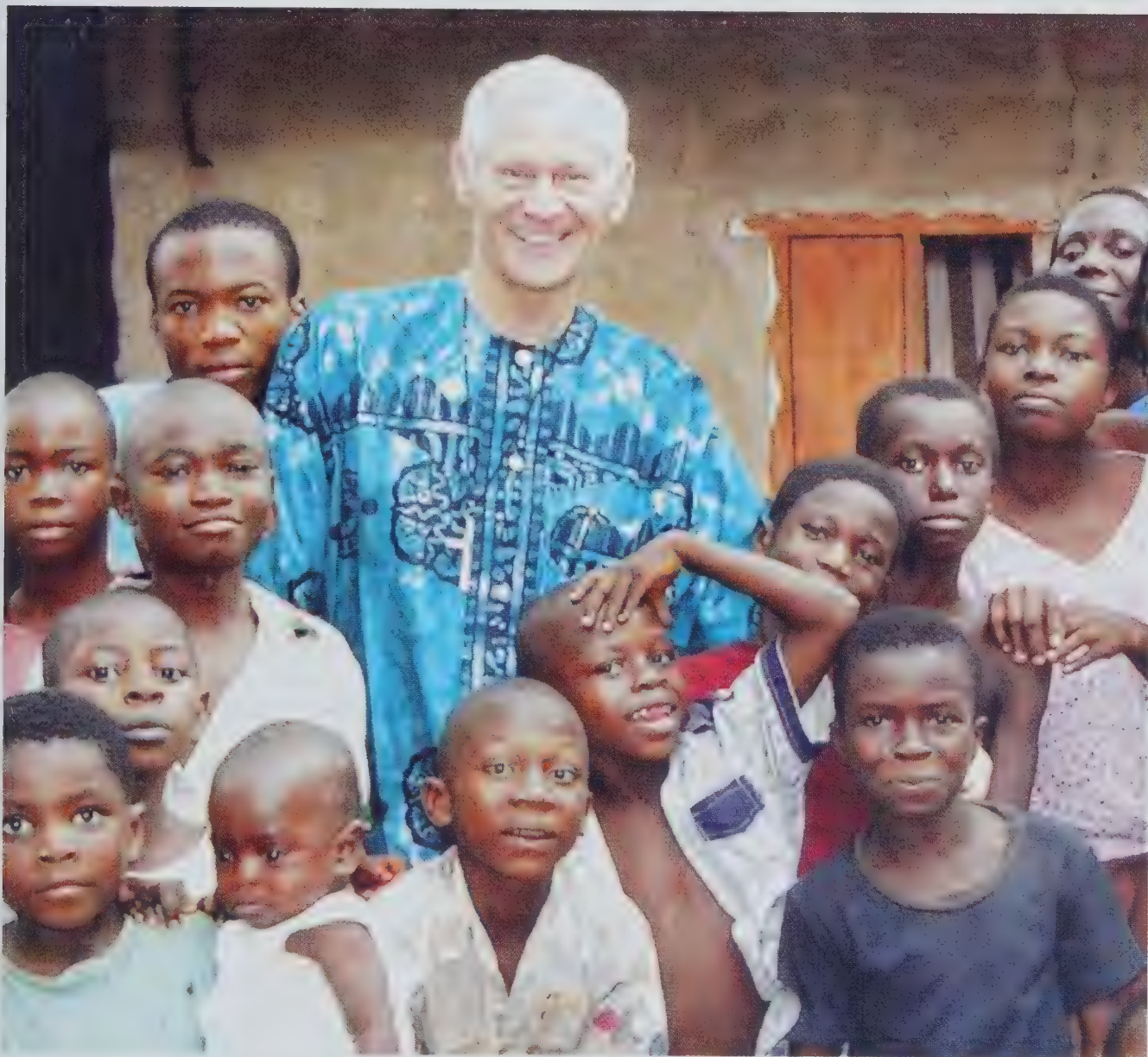
Cross-cultural understanding is a very intricate and delicate art. The persever-

ance and imagination of a Christian Nigeria Factor could strengthen the church in this regard. Nigeria, with 345 major language groups and 1,500 subgroups, has learned much about cultural diversity, tolerance, acceptance and just plain getting along. Those lessons could go a long way in educating the human family.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada cherishes its overseas partnerships. The PCN is a vital link for our understanding of this very important African country. We are challenged to look at our faith through their eyes and learn new and different ways of expressing Christ's love. Nigerians are moving onto the world's stage in many fields. We are in a privileged position to understand them. We

are also in a secure enough relationship to be able to suggest areas where we both could be engaged in further study. Their challenge to us of our lack of evangelism, our aging church population, our close alignment with secularism and consumerism is good for us to hear. In mutual exchanges, there is much that we can discuss openly and frankly in an atmosphere of love and friendship. We would benefit from a closer walk with Nigerian Presbyterians and understanding the "Nigeria Factor".

*Link Fee*







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Interview with Reg Bibby • Long-term tsunami relief • The first six years of church life

# PRESBYTERIAN Record

March 2005

A photograph of a baseball pitcher, likely from the Toronto Blue Jays, captured in the middle of a pitch. He is wearing a black jersey with the Blue Jays logo on the sleeve and a black cap. His right arm is extended forward, and his left hand is in a black glove. The background is a blurred baseball field.

## Pitching for God

Bringing mission to the majors

## Talking Mission

An informal survey of  
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Northpoint Community Church, Atlanta  
Co-author "Seven Practices of Effective  
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Trinity Community  
Presbyterian Church, Oro



**Patrick Voo**

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Photo by Carl Peterson



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An informal survey of  
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Newest Toronto Blue Jay Vince Perkins  
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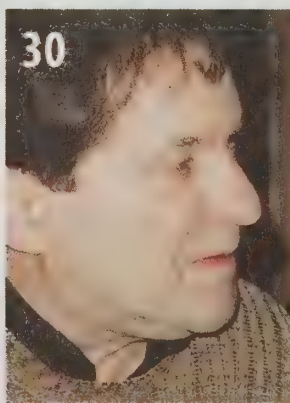
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# Churches must be made safer for ministry

**Y**ou can always tell people who are about to become parents: they're the ones buying *How to be the Most Fabulous Parent* and *How to Streetproof Your Infant*. There's little jest in that: There is a serious book published on how to keep your children tobacco-free "for parents of children ages 3 to 19." Three? "Starting prevention efforts early is the key," says the publisher's blurb.

The point is that we do not think it at all strange that putative parents go out of their way to prepare as much as possible for raising their children. Friends and family also lend a hand to help childproof the house. None of this is new. It may be more high-tech than Dr. Spock, but parents have been concerned for their children's environment since an early *homo sapiens* mother first watched a spark from the cave fire zing towards her baby.

We take it for granted that parents do these things to protect their children around the home. We take it for granted that parents check out the daycare to protect their children there. Why then do we not take it for granted that parents, and everyone else, for that matter, will make sure our churches are equally safe for ministering to our children?

It has taken two long years to get the first national policy on protecting children and other vulnerable people in the church through all the necessary hoops. As it nears final approval by general assembly why would there be anything other than dancing in the aisles? Some in the church are but others are dragging their heels. Why?

One commonly heard complaint is the fear that long-time volunteers will object to obtaining a police records check: it's demeaning, people allege, the volunteers are known in the community and it's a waste of time and a few dollars. Others complain their church doesn't have sufficient volunteers to provide two adults for high-risk ministries or can't afford to put a window in a solid door to the room used for youth ministry. Or the policy is too difficult or expensive to administer.

There is little substance behind the emotions. Such energy would be better spent getting on with the job.

First, no one can rationally object to making the church a safer place for ministry. Curmudgeons opine that policies won't make the church safer. That's a dodge. If policies didn't in fact help make the church or any other institution safer, we wouldn't have need for laws of any sort in society.

Policies do make church and society safer. The requirement for two adults to be present in high-risk ministries such as teaching young people means the chances of an adult coercing or physically overpowering a child or teen is vastly reduced. Doubters should read about the conviction of former Boston priest Paul Shanley. Or recall the heinous sex crimes of Kingston organist John Gallienne — and the suicides and wrecked lives of his young victims.

Both these men were well known in their environs. Who really knows what pillars of the community get up to behind closed doors? No one. That's the point. You can't see through solid doors. You can't know the past of the folks who moved into the new house down the block. Hence the records check. If volunteers haven't done anything wrong, they have no reason to object to it. We don't think it's insulting for airplane pilots to be tested for drug use. Why should church be different?

A church with insufficient volunteers for its mission or funds for a little carpentry might well reflect on whether it still has a viable ministry. A church that can't afford a few windows for doors is a church nailing its own cheap coffin. It may also be a church without any creative thinking. Only one teacher for Sunday school? Don't hold classes during worship, or bring the children into the service, or ....

In other words, these objections are little more than poor excuses. What will likely be a challenge at first is to train people in congregations to administer the new policy across the church in a consistent, fair manner. Still, a few workshops should do the trick. About-to-be-parents do it all the time. And we think they're just being smart.

David Harris

## Readers object to Coren's Christian Right

My blood was boiling after reading Michael Coren's sanctimonious column *The Secular Left Blames The Christian Right*. We are either in agreement with the platform of U.S. conservatives (which seems to be God's side) or, if we don't agree with that philosophy, we are part of the secular left, and are totally out of sync with God's teachings and are intolerant to boot.

Mr. Coren intimates that if we are not on the Christian Right then we are in the same bracket as "one rather glib Canadian pundit", who made the stupid remark of saying that "half of the United States wants to be like Canada and the other half like Iran". Why he would even quote such inanity defies logic.

I am not on the secular left nor on the Christian right, but I am a straightforward Christian. I struggle to understand certain parts of the Bible, but I read it with an open mind and ascertain from it what God is saying to me. We live in a different world from when the Bible was written and I take that into consideration when coming to conclusions.

I object to Mr. Coren's insinuations. Of course he knows some wonderful people who voted for Bush, probably so do we all. I also know personally equally wonderful, God-fearing and intelligent people who worked tirelessly for Kerry.

On a happier note, I have to thank Andrew Faiz for his article, *Moral Issues*

= Christian Right Agenda — he restored my blood pressure to normal.

*Ann Rogers  
Burlington, Ont.*

After the recent U.S. election, there were some serious doubts regarding some of the counting methods. Michael Coren refers to it as "the game of democracy". Surely he jests. He says "the very nature of free speech and political expression was challenged". Exactly my impression of his writing. Does he really believe that the Canadian Democrats lost? What did they lose? He also criticizes the quote "half of the United States wants to be like Canada, the other half like Iran". But that is jumping on a statement written by a fool. "In Canada", he says, "this is accepted as intelligent analysis". To use his statement, I've never seen such flummery and nonsense in my life. "A toxin of ignorance and bitterness flowed into the media bloodstream and poisoned the body politic."

Really? What bigoted drive!

*Harry Marchant  
Brampton, Ont.*

## Let moderate voices be raised

I just read Andrew Faiz's article in the January *Presbyterian Record* on moral issues and the Christian Right.

His article reflects my own feelings and beliefs, but said it better (and with greater humour) than I could have said it

myself. All too often the Christian Right seems to be able to get away with saying the most un-Christ-like things while quoting scripture to do so. And, unfortunately, it often seems that when the media decides to focus on some religious/ethical/political issue the only people quoted are religious conservatives, forgetting that there are many religious moderates and liberals who are in favour of same-sex marriage, pro choice, and concerned about issues of poverty, peace and justice.

*Tom Rodger  
Sarnia, Ont.*

## Root out child poverty

Re: January's editorial *Child Poverty Truly Threatens The Family*.

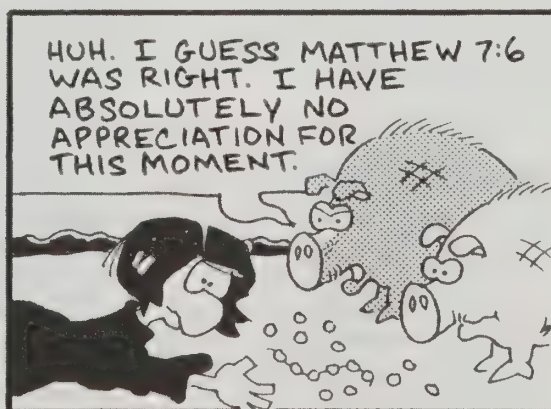
Tackle the problem at the grass roots level: i.e., welfare payments must be raised. A couple in British Columbia receives only \$900 per month (\$10,800 per year). They need help.

*G. Mackintosh  
Port Coquitlam, B.C.*

## Vatican presses UN to recognize 'Christianophobia'

A recent news story reported that the Vatican is so concerned about attacks upon Christianity that it has appealed to the United Nations organization for some form of protection for Christianity. "The Vatican is pressing the United Nations to recognize 'Christianophobia' as an evil equal to that of anti-Semitism or 'Islamophobia'."

## Pontius' Puddle





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## letters

continued

It is an ugly word — ugly to the eye, ugly to the ear and ugly to the tongue but it certainly expresses the onomatopoeia of an environment of extreme hostility to Christianity.

While I would have preferred reference to “anti-Jewish” rather than “anti-Semitism” as I still consider “Semitic” to refer to language and physical appearance not religion, perhaps the much-widened definition and its wider use may redound to the advantage of Christianity too, in the longer run. The other two monotheistic religions are not likely to give much support to the preservation of Christianity but, at best, they will probably remain neutral.

I have never favoured ecumenism in that total union is impossible, largely because the trees of this particular wood are so disparate with different histories and life-spans. Pursuing ecumenism in the present set of circumstances is like rearranging the deck-chairs on the ‘Titanic’. Cooperation is, however, well within the capabilities of the varying Christian bodies.

If protection of Christianity is not forthcoming from the pulpits then, of necessity, it must come from the pews.

*Kennedy Maconochie*

*Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Que.*

## The Record finds its home

You finally have been successful at my house.

Here's the history of the *Record* when it showed up at our house. Wow it's the *Record*, there's the recycle box. It progressed to the *Record* is here again, put it

on the coffee table then recycle box. But a strange thing took place when the *Record* achieved a major break through at our home last month. It ended up in the bathroom instead of the recycle box and we're reading it, even my 14-year-old son read an article and made a comment. I know to some that may not be what you want to hear that your magazine ends up in the bathroom, but Presbyterians much to the surprise of some, do read in the bathroom. At our house any book or magazine that ends up in the reading basket in the bathroom has made it. You're a success!

Thank you to the editor, David Harris, and his team for putting new life into the magazine. I hope you can keep bringing us commentaries and articles that make us think and even laugh. Even articles I have not agreed with are actually refreshing to me. I like to be challenged.

I pray God will continue to inspire all of you at the *Record* to keep up the great work.

*Wilma Wall*

*Mississauga, Ont.*

## Provide more opportunities for giving

I was both disappointed and dismayed to see the letters against the advertisement for World Vision in the December *Record*. I was disappointed that there should be such chauvinism on the part of PWS&D supporters. Your readers surely know, or should know, that neither Presbyterians Sharing nor PWS&D can or does operate in a vacuum. The agencies, organizations and causes that they support receive but a small portion of their budget from these

(continued on page 42)

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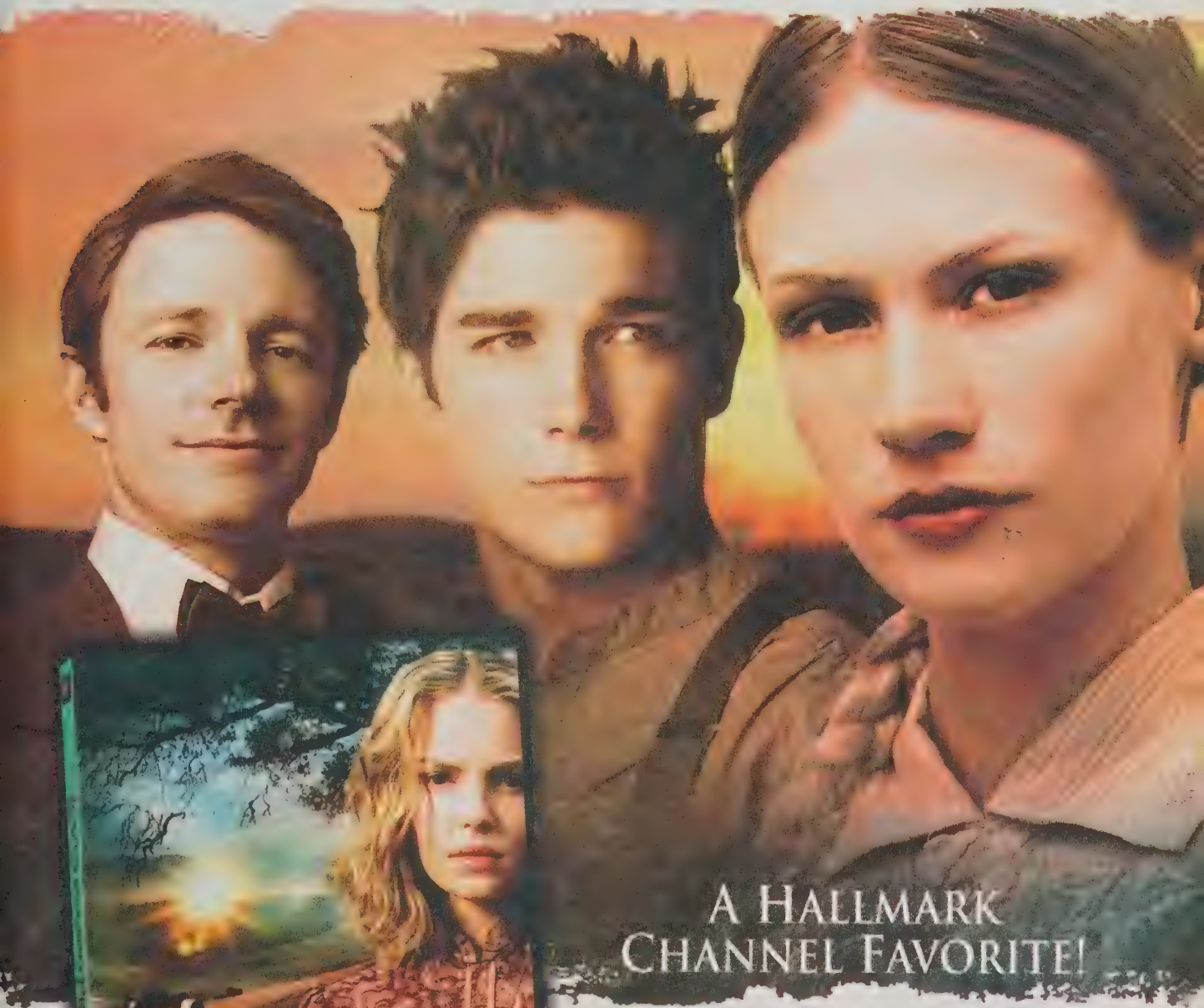
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## Monthly death tolls

Over the course of one month, as the missing were declared dead, the estimates of deaths due to the Asian tsunami rose to above 300,000. But, that wasn't the only horrendous death toll. Here is a listing of on-going death rates around the globe, each month.

### **HIV/AIDS**

250,000

42 million affected

### **Malaria**

83,000

3,000 African children die daily

### **Hepatitis B**

80,000

### **Diarrhea**

166,000, mostly children, due to bad water

### **Pneumonia/respiratory infections**

333,000, mostly children

### **Cardiovascular diseases**

1.3 million

### **Cancer**

583,000

### **Smoking**

333,000

### **Diabetes**

250,000

171 million affected

### **Physical inactivity**

166,000

### **Obesity**

1 billion adults overweight;

22 million are children under age 5

### **Child Poverty**

1.3 billion people live in severe poverty;

600 million are children

### **Malnourishment**

852 million affected

— Amy MacLachlan

## Letter from a prodigal daughter

by Elizabeth Hay

I fled both the church and the small town in which it was located as soon as I graduated from high school. I looked back with disdain upon the rather simple activities of the church, the uncritical acceptance of what I perceived to be church members' idiosyncrasies and the dogged determination to keep the dwindling congregation alive.

Forty years after my successful escape, I found myself travelling back to my hometown every weekend to visit my mother who now suffers from dementia. Initially these visits consisted of card playing, shopping and animated conversations with family and friends. As my mother's cognitive impairment progressed, conversation became more difficult and the visits more troubling. They saddened me because of her deteriorating condition. They frustrated me because of her oft-repeated questions. They angered me because funding for her care was inadequate. They frightened me because I feared that her situation might be a premonition of my future state. And, they made me very lonely because no one shared these intense experiences with me.

When my mother no longer recognized me and I found the visits increasingly awkward, I decided to take her to church. We were welcomed with open arms. People were genuinely happy to see my mother and greeted her with the respect and friendship that she had earned during her many years of communion with them. The warmth of our greeting was palpable. People came to our pew to say hello and chat with my mother, oftentimes joking in a way they knew would delight her. When the music started, so did my mother's toe tapping. Although she could not remember my name, she remembered the words to most of the old familiar hymns and happily sang along.

This became our regular Sunday morning activity. These were the people who had accepted me into their community as a youth and who were accepting me again in middle age. These were the people who had struggled to keep the congregation

alive when others and I had abandoned it. These were the people who remembered my name even though I had forgotten many of theirs. These were the people who through their goodness and kindness offered acceptance, comfort, and companionship when it was desperately needed. And, these were the people who had no idea how valuable their fellowship was to me and how critical it was to my ability to continue to spend time with my mother. I recognized that in that wonderful church I had experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. I will always be profoundly grateful to the members of the Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church in Lachute, Que., for the joyful moments they gave their eldest congregant and the solace they provided their prodigal daughter.

---

Elizabeth Hay now lives in California. Her mother is 95 years old.

## Presbyterians Sharing targets surpassed

Congregations contributed more than \$8.7 million to Presbyterians Sharing for 2004 — an increase of \$7,000 from the previous year. Gifts from individuals helped the ministry surpass its target of \$8.8 million.

A thank you letter was sent to congregations for their generosity. An excerpt follows: "It is always amazing to see the strong support from congregations across the country. Some are new, grant-receiving congregations; others are older, well-established congregations. For all congregations, whether large or small, many important needs and ministries vie for their financial support. Yet congregations understand the value and importance of sharing in ministry beyond themselves, as part of the broader church." AM



Among these seven follicly blessed students at the Toronto School of Theology in the mid-seventies are a future moderator and two bishops. From left, the dapper Rick Fee, PCC Moderator; Heather McGregor, now a YWCA Toronto executive; Caroline Lockerbee, Presbyterian minister in Burlington, Ont.; Jack Archibald, Ottawa Presbyterian minister; Colin Johnson, Anglican bishop of Toronto; David Danner, Episcopal priest in Massachusetts; and Jim Wingle, Roman Catholic bishop of St. Catharines.

## East Toronto presbytery sends same-sex issue to assembly

The Presbytery of East Toronto is sending an overture to General Assembly, asking it to establish a committee that will study same-sex marriage. The presbytery hopes the committee will report back to assembly within two years, providing clear direction to congregations and clergy that are asked to participate in the marriages of same-sex couples. The motion was passed with little discussion.

The overture is in response to a request for guidance from Rev. Jane Swatridge, who was asked to perform the marriage of a gay couple in March 2004. Presbytery created a task force in April to study the matter. In October, they met for a special workshop where they discussed the issue in depth. In November, the committee presented its report, but presbytery sent it back for clarification.

The resulting overture passed by presbytery on Feb 1 — the same day new legislation on same-sex marriage was introduced in the House of Commons — was created to reflect the diversity found within the presbytery. It specifically asked for the assembly to re-examine the church's doctrine on marriage, clarify the church's position on same-sex marriages, and provide direction on an appropriate response to same-sex couples asking to be wed.

Some dissenters objected to the overture because, they believed, the assembly has already studied the issue and made its position known. In 2002, assembly reaffirmed that marriage is "between one man and one woman." Rev. Kevin Livingston of Knox, Spadina, argued that the church's position is stated clearly in *Living Faith* and the *Westminster Confession*. AM

## Christian school can grant graduate degree

A private Christian graduate school has received permission to grant masters and doctoral degrees in philosophy. Established in 1967 the Institute for Christian Studies describes itself as, "a school in the Reformed tradition, committed to self-critique and continual change." Pursuing a Christian approach to philosophy, the humanities and social sciences are the school's main endeavours.

The decision improved upon the school's previous program that was only a stepping stone on the road to receiving a PhD; and even that had to be in conjunction with a university in Amsterdam. "ICS has demonstrated that we have the capacity and the skills to deliver quality education at a graduate level," said Dr. Harry Fernhout, ICS president. "We are extremely grateful to our faculty, students and supporters, and especially, to God for his faithful leading." AM





Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT International

The Rev. Nadarajah Arulnathan, a Methodist pastor in Passikudah, Sri Lanka, stands in front of his church, damaged by the tsunami.

## Rebuilding lives after burying the bodies

by Amy MacLachlan

Once the debris is cleared away, bodies are buried, emergency food and supplies are handed out and immediate wounds and illnesses are tended to, the long process of rehabilitation and reconstruction to tsunami-ravaged countries must begin. "We're well into rehabilitation now," said Rick Fee, director of Presbyterian World Service & Development. "We're beginning to look at more long-term issues."

Caring for the thousands of orphans whose parents were killed in the disaster, and tending to the psycho-social needs of those who experienced trauma are key components of the rehabilitation effort. The UN estimates that 1.5 million children are now homeless; many are orphans. In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, the area hardest-hit by the tsunami, providing clean water and treating disease are of top priority. Wounds that weren't treated and exposed to unclean conditions led to severe infections. Because of this, amputations are the most common operation in Banda Aceh.

Helping survivors rebuild their livelihoods and providing adequate healthcare are a great concern, said Fee. Replacing temporary shelters with new homes, rebuilding fishing boats lost in the enormous waves, and helping people restart their businesses are a major part of the

### 'Because of the ACT network, we get excellent reports on what is needed'

*Rick Fee, PWS&D director*

reconstruction phase. The \$926,000 raised by Presbyterians will support this work. The projects will be carried out by PWS&D's long time partner Action by Churches Together and other local agencies.

In the next three to nine months, ACT will focus on its clean water and sanitation program, which includes building latrines, removing garbage, clearing seawater from

contaminated wells, and installing community water tanks. ACT workers will also help provide education and school assistance, strengthen food security by providing seeds, tools and fishing equipment and operate training programs to help impoverished communities create and maintain a higher standard of living. Continuing to supply food aid (which PWS&D does through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank) remains on the "to do" list.

Matching funds granted by the Canadian government will help support such efforts, which will last for at least 18 to 24 months. "Ottawa wanted everything done by March," said Fee, "but that's impossible. So aid agencies in Canada spoke to CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] and asked for a longer commitment.

"Because of the ACT network, we get excellent reports on what is needed," said Fee. "We get what we require, rather than reinventing the wheel and sending more people over there to see what's next. We can plug in immediately." ■

# Where does the money go, donors ask?

by Amy MacLachlan

The questions kept coming. And coming. For an hour, Rick Fee, director of Presbyterian World Service & Development, assured the female caller that her donation would be well spent. Her concerns are not unique. Other PWS&D staffers fielded similar calls. After giving nearly \$926,000 to tsunami relief, Presbyterians want to be certain their money is well spent.

Fund-matching was one of the most pressing questions about tsunami relief. "People are mostly concerned about government matching," said Naba Gurung, a program associate with the Anglican Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. "If their funds weren't going to be matched, they would go elsewhere."

"Since people were given a choice from the beginning, they were forced to make a decision," said Fee. "People started thinking, 'How do I choose?' and then asked us, 'What are you doing? How are you doing it? How does that fit in with other agencies?'"

Unfortunately, comparing charities is a somewhat futile task. The big three — Canadian Red Cross, World Vision Canada and UNICEF Canada — have large staffs and a lot of expenses. They also raised millions of dollars for the cause. It is difficult to compare them to smaller charities such as Canadian Lutheran World Relief with a full-time staff of 11 or PWS&D with a staff of five. "There's no agreed upon way of what's included in administrative costs," said Fee. "It's like comparing apples and oranges."

The general barometer is determining the percentage of administrative expenses, which normally include staff salaries, office expenses and expenses pertaining to board and committee meetings. The differences lie in more com-

plex areas such as coordinating overseas projects, processing donations, and paying for rent and utilities. The Mennonite Central Committee Canada, for example, counts project coordination as a project cost. Other charities consider it administration.

The MCC splits its expenses for processing donations between administration and fundraising. The Primate's Fund usually doesn't need to count this as expenditure because donations are processed at the congregational level. However, due to the government fund-matching for the tsunami appeal, receipts were processed at the head office, and have thus become an administration cost. PWS&D has hired two temporary workers to help process tsunami donations and distribute tax receipts — an expense that falls under a separate budget line for contract work. Finally, most charities pay a price for rent and utilities, while the Presbyterian Church in Canada absorbs those costs for PWS&D. "The church believes in the ministry, so every attempt is made to keep overhead as low as possible," said Fee.

The Primate's Fund puts 100 per cent of its emergency donations towards relief,

as does Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has an in-house rule of fixing its administrative costs for emergency projects at 8.5 per cent, down from the 10.4 per cent it normally spends. PWS&D keeps its administrative costs for emergency appeals to about 3.5 per cent, down from its regular 6.9.

The Canadian Revenue Agency requires that no more than 20 per cent be spent on administration costs and fundraising when donations are given to a specific appeal. If the charity is acting on behalf of another charity, and not doing any of the work themselves, they must put 100 per cent of givings towards a specified project.

Questioning how things work in the relief and development world can have positive implications. "If there is a positive thing to come out of the tsunami," said Ken Woodingham of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, "it is that the public is starting to understand the reality of international development work. There's no such thing as an emergency ending in three months — it can go on for years." **R**

## The wave of relief

| Agency   | Funds Raised  | Full-time Staff | Program Expenses | Administration Expenses | Fundraising Expenses |
|--|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| PWS&D  | \$926,000     | 5               | 88.9%            | 6.9%                    | 4.2%                 |
| Canadian Lutheran World Relief                         | \$815,000     | 11              | 91%              | 2%                      | 6.6%                 |
| Primate's World Relief & Development Fund              | \$728,000     | 20              | 89%              | 7.5%                    | 3.5%                 |
| Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace | \$9.5 million | 74              | 73.7%            | 10.4%                   | 3%                   |
| Mennonite Central Committee Canada                     | \$6.7 million | 95              | 95.3%            | 4.2%                    | 0.5%                 |



# Executive staff, professors receive a raise

*Increase brings pay into line with other denominations in Toronto*

Assembly Council has approved a pay-hike for national church executive staff to bring them in line with comparable positions in the Toronto area. As of Jan. 1, 2005, the church's top three general secretary positions — principal clerk, chief financial officer and general secretary of the Life and Mission agency — are receiving a clergy stipend of \$82,300, up from \$65,249. Non-clergy receive another 15 per cent to compensate for the clergy housing tax deduction.

The raise was first discussed in March 2003, when the church realized it could not attract qualified candidates for the position of CFO on the old pay-scale. A comparison of positions in other denominations and clergy in the Toronto area was undertaken and in November 2004, recommendations were presented to council and the decision was made to increase the pay. The personnel policy

committee recommended all three general secretaries be paid the same. (Staff were not present for the discussions.)

Raises for associate secretaries are slated to begin next January and will be fully phased in by 2008. Associate secretaries who are clergy will earn \$73,689, while lay or non-clergy will earn \$84,742 to compensate for the income tax housing deduction.

Council has provided for increased funding for professor's salaries at the three Presbyterian seminaries, but has left the decision to the colleges. To facilitate the increase, grants to the colleges (taken from the operating budget of Presbyterians Sharing) will go up to 10.1 per cent in 2008 (or \$166,570) from the current 8.6 per cent (or \$54,440).

The increases this year and next will come from a surplus in the operating fund. The finance committee and man-

agement team have until March 2006 to create a new a budget to support the increases beyond 2006. The increases for executive, associate and professorial staff in 2007 will require \$190,000. For 2008, \$286,000 will be needed, representing about 2.8 per cent of the national church's expected budget for that year.

Rev. George Malcolm, a member of the finance committee, said it is hoped the changes can be accomplished without affecting program funding. Council has proposed a comprehensive policy for handling executive stipends in future that General Assembly will be asked to approve in June.

The independent Presbyterian Church Building Corporation and Presbyterian Record Inc., which are not funded by the church, have not said whether they will continue precedent and match their executive salaries to the new levels.

*Amy MacLachlan*

## Toronto minister charged with sexual assault

A prominent Toronto minister has been charged with sexual assault and sexual exploitation of a teenager for an alleged incident 15 years ago. Rev. Robert Fourney, minister at Glenview, the largest Presbyterian church in Toronto, and former moderator of East Toronto Presbytery appeared in Collingwood court on Feb 1. He is scheduled to appear again March 8, when a date for a preliminary hearing is expected to be set.

The assault allegedly occurred in 1990, while Fourney was minister at St. Andrew's, Windsor. The charge alleges Fourney inappropriately touched a young man over whom he was in a position of trust and authority. A court publication ban prevents naming the complainant. Following the church's policy for such matters, Fourney is on a paid leave of absence and cannot function as a minister.

Prior to being charged on Jan. 7, Fourney voluntarily approached the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Committee of the East Toronto Presbytery in November and informed them of the pending charge. "Bob has always been upfront and forthright," said David McIntyre, Glenview's clerk of session. "As soon as he heard about the complaint, he notified the committee. He hasn't hidden anything."

As required by the policy, presbytery met in camera on Jan. 4, where presbyters were informed of the policy and codes of conduct. The congregation was informed that Sunday. Fourney's predecessor, Rev. Harold Morris, and Rev. Don Pollock are the interim ministers. "It made things easier on the congregation since they were already ministers in association at Glenview," said McIntyre. "There's a comfort level with them both." Rev. Kevin Liv-

ingston is presbytery's interim moderator.

Since 1993, when the General Assembly adopted the Policy for Dealing with Sexual Abuse/Harassment, nine ministers have had complaints sustained against them. Three of the nine faced criminal charges; two went to trial and one was found guilty. As of 2003, there were almost 700 active and nearly 600 retired ministers.

Fourney was a nominee for moderator of General Assembly in 2003. He is married with two grown children. "It's important for people to understand that Glenview is supporting Bob and he's in our thoughts and prayers at all times," said McIntyre, "and we would ask that other congregations would also keep him in their prayers."

Fourney and his lawyer declined comment.

*Amy MacLachlan*

# Insurance depends on new screening policy

by Amy MacLachlan

**C**ongregations who fail to implement the church's proposed volunteer screening and training policy may find themselves without insurance to cover abuse claims. The warning comes from Michael Petersen of Marsh Canada Insurance. Petersen said the coverage "is not a warranty" against possible slip-ups or oversights in abuse protocols. He said the possibility exists for a congregation to make a claim and, if found not to be in full compliance with the guidelines, refused compensation.

*Leading with Care: A Policy for Ensuring a Climate of Safety in the Presbyterian Church in Canada* was presented as a draft to the General Assembly in 2002. It received revisions, returned in 2004 for further comment, and is scheduled to make it back to the floor this June. If passed, congregations will be expected to follow its requests.

The policy insists that congregations screen volunteers and employees using interviews, references and police records checks. It calls for clearly stated definitions of all forms of abuse and a code of conduct for employees and volunteers. Precautionary measures such as windows in classrooms, keeping doors open during counselling sessions, and avoiding one-on-one time between a child and adult must be implemented.

Some congregations have argued that complying with the stipulations will be too expensive to implement and enforce. "Quite a few congregations have told us, 'This is great. What has taken you so long in developing this?'" said Dorothy Henderson, associate secretary for Youth and Child Ministries. "Others fear what it will do to their church."

Insurance coverage is dependent on the policy being followed to the letter. There are concerns that some congregations might not be able to administer every detail. "It's a positive move for the church and it's good for congregations," said Rev. Peter Coutts, minister at

St. Andrew's, Calgary. "But my concern is that we're boxing ourselves in with a policy that we're obliged to follow that could leave us vulnerable to insurance companies. If there isn't full compliance and if something goes wrong, will we be able to utilize the coverage given through our insurance program?"

In 2002, the national church received a letter from Marsh (one of only a handful of brokers that insures churches and the principal insurer of the Presbyterian

possibly even two) per congregation, compared to the \$100,000 previously available.

The request from Zurich is not unique. "The insurance industry has been backing away from abuse coverage for a number of years," said Petersen. He noted several cases in the United States where settlements of US \$60 and \$100 million were doled out by insurance companies over abuse cases. "Insurance companies are reluctant to become part of that process."

Petersen said the church "has gone above and beyond what Zurich asked for." It's up to presbyteries to determine if congregations have followed the new protocol, advise Marsh of the change, and ensure a monitoring process is established. "We're trying to avoid a time limit [on when congregations have to adopt the policy]," said Petersen. "Still, congregations have been aware of this for a couple of years and should have been preparing. Once the policy is approved, they should put it in place as soon as possible."

Henderson believes the policy will make the church's ministry better. "What parent wants their child in Boy Scouts when the leader hasn't been screened?" she asked. "The church has always overlooked that, but we shouldn't, because we're just as capable of having unsafe conditions as any other organization." **R**

## 'What parent wants their child in Boy Scouts when the leader hasn't been screened?'

Dorothy Henderson

Church with 289 congregations), stating that Zurich Insurance Company, the underwriter for Marsh, requested all congregations come in line with protection policies if they wanted their insurance renewed.

Zurich determined the church had sufficient policies to deal with abuse once it happened; however, it felt the church was lacking in preventative measures such as volunteer screening, training and implementation, and monitoring performance. In return for compliance, coverage will increase to \$1 million (and

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Elder Elves Tom Clapp and Jorris Zubatuk bid farewell to Rev. Kennedy as he moves from St. Paul's, Winchester to the Pastoral Charge of Moose Creek, Maxville and St. Elmo, in Ontario.



That was some 'I do' Bob and Leta Lawrence uttered on Boxing Day, 1934. Seventy years later they stand behind a massive cake at Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., just as happy as the day they first met. They have served their marriage, their community and their church with faith and gladness over the decades.

Don Muir motivates the clan at Presbyterian Church offices in Don Mills, Ont., to give to the annual United Way campaign last fall. With Don's help staff raised over \$6,000. Don played hymns, anthems and Led Zeppelin classics.



From Ireland to Alberta — Rev. Martin Lynas, here with his wife Meta, celebrated 50 years of ordination at Varsity Acres, Calgary, Alta., on Thanksgiving Sunday last year. Mr. Lynas was ordained in Dublin in 1954 at the Methodist Conference. He served eight years as pastoral associate at Varsity Acres. Mrs. Lynas was presented with a corsage, Rev. Lynas with gifts and all shared in cake and fellowship.

## Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PCRecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:PCRecord@presbyterian.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to:  
The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified.

The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.

Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs will not be returned.



The Bermuda Pipe Band, along with a young sword dancer, helped launch the Christmas season at St. Andrew's, Bermuda. The skirl of the music and the grace of the dancer helped the congregation forget their sunny climes and remember the real warmth of the motherland.



▲ Rev. Eun-Joo Park and Wanda Rathbone celebrate Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.'s 79 anniversary with the appropriate confection.



▲ Senior Summer Camp kids, in the Presbytery of Superior, pose for a quick shot before heading off for lunch. This 'Presby-Camp' brings youth and kids together from across Northwestern Ontario for one unforgettable week each summer.



◀ Rev. Clive Simpson returned last July to St. Paul's, Galahad, Alta., where he had been minister from 1969-1972, to celebrate the congregation's 50 anniversary. Joining him around the cake are nine of the original 22 charter members. The years in no way have dimmed their joy.



St. Andrew's, South Lancaster, Ont., opened a new Christian Education Centre last June. Annabell McNaughton, senior member, cuts the ribbon, as Clark McCuaig (left) and Rev. Ian MacMillan look on, along with the Sunday school children. The new centre houses classrooms, a library, a nursery and meeting spaces.



Rev. Lloyd Murdock and his daughter Heidi Murdock, present a cheque for \$1,288 to the Russian Consul General to Canada in support of the Beslan school massacre victims. The money was raised through a Celtic concert held at Ephraim Scott, South Haven, NS. The congregations in Mr. Murdock's charge also had a fundraiser for PWS&Ds AIDS campaign.

Former PCC Moderator, Rev. P. A. (Sandy) McDonald is presented with a gift by Grace Binkle for helping inaugurate Knox, North Easthope, Ont.'s 160 anniversary, last April.



First, Seaforth, Ont., received a Bell Strike grandfather clock, made by Len Churcher, right, in memory of the late Dr. Glenn D. Campbell, who was minister there from 1948-1958. The clock was presented by his wife Marion Campbell and dedicated by the current minister Rev. Henry Huberts.

# A thousand ministries make for myriad missions

*An informal survey of the ways Presbyterians follow Christ*

**E**verything a church does is ministry. Everything. Everything a church does is mission. Everything.

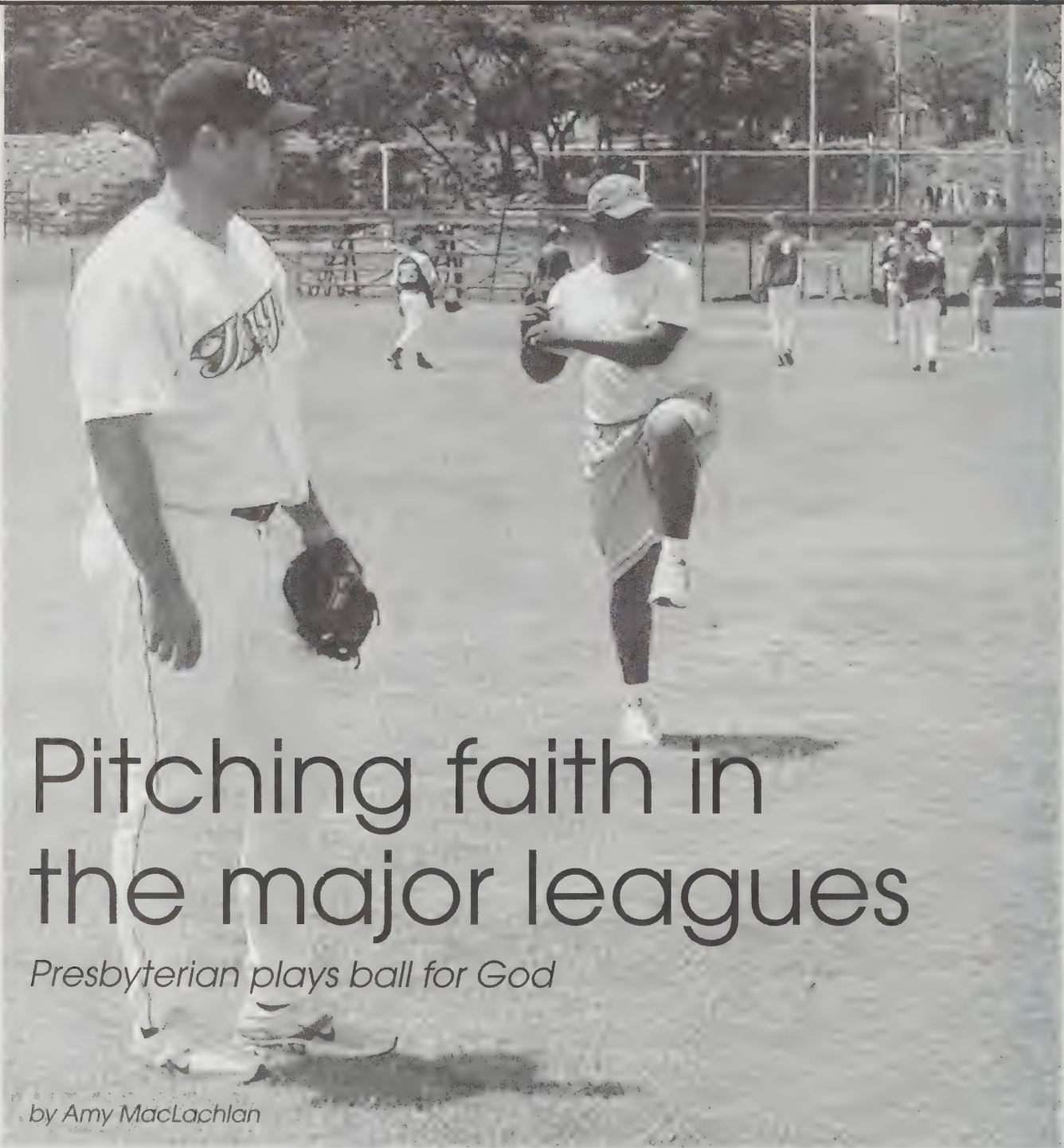
The central activity in every church is Sunday morning worship, of course. That is the most obvious form of ministry and mission. But over the course of 52 Sunday services each year, churches celebrate the Word in 52 different ways. Each Sunday is unique, each bears a different message and each carries forth a different mission.

Sunday worship is not where ministry and mission ends. Churches use the energy of the message to spread their ministry throughout their community, the nation and around the globe. The reach of each church, no matter how small, no matter how remote, is global. Prayers, activities, givings, energy, and faith reach to the farthest corners of our planet.

There are nearly 1,000 pastoral charges within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. That means there are at the very least 1,000 variations on ministry each week, as each charge is unique in its dynamics. Surveying these ministries is a massive task. The following pages contain an informal and anecdotal collection of stories on how we do ministry (and mission). It is hardly an exhaustive list, representing a very small percentage of the countless activities performed by our churches. From bake sales to working with street prostitutes, Presbyterians do Christ's work, every day, in many different ways.







Photos courtesy of Unlimited Potential

# Pitching faith in the major leagues

*Presbyterian plays ball for God*

by Amy MacLachlan

**M**oney. Women. Fame. Prestige. Being a major league baseball player has its perks. But worldly temptations and inflated egos are things Vince Perkins is trying to resist. As a Christian in the majors, one of the newest players for the Toronto Blue Jays tries to keep his eyes on God. "I always try to remember why I'm here," said the British Columbia native. "There's a lot of money to be made and a lot of worldly things available, but I try to concentrate on my faith, and make sure I'm doing God's will."

Although he has played baseball for most of his life — following his father who played ball in college, and his grand-

father who was a minor league umpire — the quintessential summer sport is not Perkins' ultimate goal. "Most of the guys are just happy to be playing baseball, but if that were gone, they wouldn't know what to do," he said. "I know I have something else; baseball isn't the most important thing in my life."

A member of St. Andrew's, Victoria, B.C., his faith took him to South Africa in December to help with a baseball camp for kids. Travelling with Unlimited Potential, Inc., a Christian mission organization catering to baseball players, Perkins spent two weeks teaching youth baseball skills, Bible stories, and shared his love of Jesus Christ. "Some of the kids didn't have

## 'The challenge is walking the right path and not getting caught up in what the team does'

shoes to play in. I wished I could do more than what I did. Parts of it were really sad. A lot of the kids had lost one or both parents to AIDS," recalled Perkins, of his first mission trip. "I was surprised by the range in classes — from the wealthy with their mansions in the hills overlooking the ocean, and then a mile away, there were sheet metal huts with dirt floors and no water. It was a shock."

Despite the difficult circumstances, Perkins said he'd love to do another mission — even if it wasn't overseas. For now, he has to get ready for the approaching baseball season. Drafted by the Jays in 2000, the right-handed pitcher has paid his dues playing on the Jays' Class-A farm team in Dunedin, Florida. Recently named to Toronto's 40-man roster, the 23-year-old posted 47 strikeouts in 54 2/3 innings pitched in Dunedin in 2004. He had a 3.95 earned run average for 13 games, and a record of 1-4. The 6-foot-5 Perkins throws a 95 mph fastball and 86 mph slider.

When he is with his teammates, Perkins tries to set a good example. "I try to find opportunities to share my faith with the team. Some are open and some are not. But people see how I live, and they may question why I don't do certain things. And if anyone asks me, I'm happy to share."

He and his fiancée, Lori, hope to get married in Dec. 2006. She's a high school teacher and varsity coach in Florida, the state where Perkins attended college. His commitment to his fiancée and to Christ keeps him motivated to live a good life. "The challenge is walking the right path, and not getting caught up in what the team does," he said. "There comes a point when you have to say, 'I'm not going there.' It's tough sometimes. You don't want to do certain things, but you don't want to make people mad either. But with some things, you just can't compromise." **R**

Photo: Anneli Dufva, ACT



**Rosa Amaya outside the new house that she and her husband Orlando built with support from ACT.**

Millions of families in Colombia have been forced from their homes by a conflict that has lasted 40 years, and left more than 15 million people living in extreme poverty. Many of the internally displaced — families like Rosa Amaya's — struggle to survive on pieces of land no one wants, harsh, rough areas without electricity, water, health care or schools. It is an ongoing emergency.

PWS&D is working with Action by Churches Together (ACT) — a global alliance of churches working together to save lives in disaster situations — to provide hope for the displaced in Colombia. ACT helped Rosa Amaya and other families build proper houses, construct latrines, and bring water to their homes. It is part of a program to provide food security, health, psychosocial care and advocacy for families in Colombia — families like Rosa's.

### **Remember the hidden emergencies. Support PWS&D.**

PWS&D's relief and development programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from *Presbyterians Sharing...*

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# Welcome begins at the door

*These churches didn't have to look far to find their mission work, it was right under their noses*

by Amy MacLachlan, with Amy Cameron

**R**eaching out in dynamic new ways doesn't always require leaving the church building. Unique ministry can happen where you worship — you just have to figure out how to use what you've already got.

Getting rid of what you have to make way for something new is a twist on this idea, and it's working for a congregation near Chatham, Ont. Blenheim Church had a healthy store of money, but few people filling the pews. After considerable soul searching, the congregation sold the building and put the profit to better use.

The money is now funding a youth ministry. Rev. Tom Godfrey helped develop KRAM — the Kent Regional Alternate Ministry. It was born out of the need to give youth in the area more attention. "We worked hard, but we couldn't get

enough people to carry on," said Peggy Roger, a member at Blenheim for nearly 18 years. "The young people are really enjoying it. It's a wonderful ministry."

KRAM was launched at its new home, Duart Church in Muirkirk, Ont., at the church's 134th anniversary service on Nov. 7. Thanks to Godfrey's musical talent, praise and worship are a large part of the program.

The 14 to 16 people who had been attending Blenheim have dispersed to other churches in surrounding areas — some Presbyterian, some not. The church was sold to the Royal Canadian Legion, who turned it into the Blenheim Freedom Library and Museum. "We're pleased about that," said Roger. "We couldn't very well go on with a dwindling congregation and not enough helpers. People have said to me, 'you must be sad.' I say, 'Not

really. It's being used for a good purpose, it's honoured as a church building, and the money is used for furthering the church in the community and among youth.'"

It was an interest in youth that led Parkwood Church in Ottawa to a new ministry with the multicultural community. Parkwood hosts an after-school tutorial program for children from the area. Run by a community member, the program and the church originally had little to do with each other. Family members used to wait quietly in the narthex, keeping to themselves until their children's class was done. Sensing the opportunity, Rev. James Hurd decided to extend some hospitality.

Jan Sheridan, an elder, heeded the call, and now the church is bustling with noise and fellowship on the nights of the tutorial. She learned the children's names, offered juice to those waiting, and led the kids in crafts which are donated to charitable causes. Doctors Without Borders has benefited from teddy bears made by the children. Some of the kids' mothers have even shown up to Sunday service.

"It certainly has continued to build upon a sense of openness. It conveys to the com-



Volunteers, from left, Nancy Rothwell, Audrey Wickie and Lois Tuft hold examples of wigs and hats that are available free of charge to cancer patients through a program at Knox, Stratford, Ont.

Photo by Brian Shypula/Stratford Beacon Herald

munity that this is a place where people can find help and a warm welcome. It's helped some people in the congregation realize that reaching out to a changing neighbourhood isn't that difficult," said Hurd. "We want to share the gospel, but we have to build bridges with people first."

St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, is busy building bridges with the elderly. Like many Presbyterian churches, St. Andrew's has many members unable to come to Sunday service. Sensing that visits to the congregation's shut-ins weren't enough, the church decided to bring these elderly members to the church, instead of the other way around.

Originally just for shut-ins, the guest list has grown to include other old timers. Thanks to this amendment, St. Andrew's welcomes about 40 people to the special service each year. Guests are picked up and dropped off by church volunteers.

"Just seeing the look on people's faces who haven't been out for a long time is enough for me," said Rev. Annabelle Wallace, co-minister, along with Rev. Amanda Currie. "I can think of two men who came for their first time, and they were just beaming! They were so glad to be back in a church building."

Using the church to minister with music and meals has spawned the creation of the Bistro Boys. In southern Alberta at St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, the Boys are exercising their vocal chords and culinary skills. A group of 20 men, ages 12 to 85, have been wowing crowds with their amusing songs and succulent meals. Created to help ease the burden of food production



Ed Taylor, Don McLean and Brian Fenz are three of the Bistro Boys of St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta.

Photo by Les Toth

on the congregation's women, what started out as a small group has grown into a popular male fellowship that hosts six or seven functions each year. "If there's a new family in the church, I approach the husband and I'm not often turned down. It's a great entry into the church as it's non-threatening," said Terry Basaraba, the main organizer. "You don't even have to know how to cook. The young guys in the congregation just love it!"

Pinpointing a need in the congregation and the community is essential for making a new ministry highly effective. The physical health of its members was overwhelming the congregation at Knox, Stratford. They knew national statistics were staggering:

## Love the story, love God

by Ty Ragan

I love to tell stories — all varieties. Always have; I still have a comic book on subscription. I have been a youth leader for many years and over those years I have struggled to find ways to tell Bible stories. With my comic books as inspiration, and a Rabbi for guidance, I've developed a story telling method; one I find works very well, which I call the Rabinnical.

I joke that God used to be a lot more visual in his teachings. That's what he did at Jericho's Walls. He meted out the ultimate butt kicking. Telling that story, as a dramatic tale, brings me to telling my youth about the Kingdom of God.

In telling the story of David and Goliath, we argue about how a pebble could go through a giant's head. This is the visual language of comic books. Or, how cool it would be to have aquariums to peer at fishes after Moses' trick with

the sea. And, isn't it funny how a feast day fell after the circumcision of all the warriors of Israel? And, did the vomit stick to Jonah after the whale puked him onto the beach?

All great questions, but why were we talking about them (and in some cases getting very weird looks from elders as they choose the most awkward moments to walk by and peer in)? Because they are the story. We forget that the stories of the Bible are entertaining. As my chorus of youth tells me, we're slow and God has to keep inventing new ways to talk to us. (Yes we are slow and occasionally just plain dumb — just look at the Golden Calf when Moses goes up the hill to get the Ten Commandments, or Peter telling God that he can't eat what God is offering him because it is unclean.)

I know I could find more traditional

ways to teach the Bible. But then who likes easy — the challenge of the story is in the telling. Just like a Rabbi on the hill teaching, I sit in a church kitchen with too much pop and really great food talking about why we circumcise, will pharaoh ever get smarter, and were all the plagues cumulative or did they vanish after each one.

My love of story grew out of my love of comic books (Superman, Captain America and Spiderman). It has followed me into ministry as I teach the story I am most passionate about: God's constant seeking of a relationship with us.

---

Ty Ragan started a youth group at Centennial, Calgary, Alta. He serves at the Mustard Seed Street Ministry in Calgary, and works with a young adults group at Rockyview Alliance. He is studying for his Master of Divinity at Canadian Theological Seminary.



one in three Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer. The rates in Stratford, Ont., alone were extremely high. Lois Tutt, clerk of session of Knox's health committee, lost her father to cancer and then her best friend was diagnosed. "I had known so many people affected by this," she said. "You get a sense of overwhelming frustration and helplessness because there isn't anything you can do."

But session decided something could be done and wanted to get involved. It mapped a strategic plan and the health committee started asking some important questions. "Do people in Stratford receive enough support for cancer care? What can we do as a church to help fill some of that gap? Should this be solely for Knox or seen as community outreach, striving to fulfill needs that the community has, and that existing health care is unable to provide?" The decision was easy — in a cozy city of 30,000, community is paramount.

The team met with local cancer support groups and the head of the newly opened chemotherapy unit at the Stratford hospital. Everyone told them the same thing: we need free wigs. In the past, most patients have had to travel 60 km to London or

155 km to Toronto for chemotherapy. Usually, while there, they visit wig rooms for advice and free hairpieces or hats. Wigs are expensive, especially for real and styled hair. People from a small town, explained Tutt, travelling to a larger centre, paying for gas, accommodations and meals, can't afford to pay for what is ultimately seen by many as vanity. "You don't think about what losing their hair does," she says. "It affects people's self-esteem and their dignity." In Nov. 2004, Knox debuted a wigery for people battling cancer.

Within the first month, half a dozen people called on the service. "Everything we've tried to do around the wig room has been so easy and people have been so generous. It just speaks to me that God has had His hands around this," said Tutt, who added that not only have the wigs, hats and scarves all been donated, but so have the services of local hairdressers. "People are just coming out of the woodwork and saying, 'How can I help?'"

The work of such Presbyterian ministries is dependent upon dedicated parishioners, like those at Duart, the small country church chosen to host KRAM. "They're dedicated to the church and they're dedicated to God," said Peggy Roger. **R**

**God has had his hands around this. People have been so generous**

## Musical prepares the way

by John McTavish

*Godspell*, the musical, has a rock-like score which speaks to teens' high energy level. Its humorous rendition of the gospels allows them to have fun while learning more about Jesus. Its high level of improvisation releases their imaginations. *Godspell* is a great way to capture the imagination and encourage the faith of teenagers.

It begins with the story of the Tower of Babel. Eight philosophers and theologians — Socrates, Aquinas, Luther, da Vinci, Gibbon, Nietzsche, Sartre and Buckminster Fuller — represent the builders of the Tower. Their songs summarize the lifetime arguments of each man. Problem is, the thinkers care only to listen to themselves, and their proud modern-day Tower of Babel quickly collapses into an ear-splitting babble of noise.

Enter Jesus. He doesn't out shout the deep thinkers; instead, he's humble and childlike. His winsome spirit moves the disciples to join him in acting out the familiar teachings and parables in speech, pantomime, song and dance. They have so much fun

that when the darkness of betrayal and crucifixion falls, it's as incomprehensible as the presence of evil itself in the world.

Yet the end is not tragic. The Jesus who clowns his way into people's hearts, is the same Jesus who announces, "Do not suppose that I have come to abolish the Law and the prophets: I did not come to abolish, but to complete." Through his suffering and death, all is completed. The crucified Christ is raised up and made the sign of God's

everlasting life, and laughter and song triumph at the heart of all things.

I have produced *Godspell* five times in my ministry. Every production has been, for everybody involved, both an incomparable theatrical experience and a deeply religious one.

Unlike other Broadway musicals, *Godspell* is within reach of the limited resources of the smallest drama group. The set consists merely of two saw-horses, three planks and a chain link fence (and you can get away without the fence).

The homemade costumes are colourful Salvation Army cast-offs, the musical score is accessible to untrained voices, and the pit band, so long as the pianist can handle the upbeat rock score, is easily realizable.

I have written a director's guidebook in order to make the show even more accessible for amateur groups. For more information, contact me by e-mail: [jmctav@vianet.ca](mailto:jmctav@vianet.ca).

John McTavish is a retired United Church minister.



# Parish nurses provide holistic healing

*Caring for the body of Christ and the human body*

by Amy Cameron

**T**here are a lot of frustrations in the health care system,” said Amy Tolhurst, Quebec’s only parish nurse. Officially she is the parish nurse for the two Presbyterian congregations in Howick, a friendly little village, and Howick United. Unofficially, Tolhurst ministers to anyone who asks. “People tell me what their problems are and we work through it with them. For example, there is a lot of walking people through preparations for surgery. The confidence that they feel, I think that’s the difference.” Tolhurst is one of a small but growing group of nurses across the country that are helping to heal mind, body *and* spirit.

Parish nursing is a relatively new ministry. The concept of addressing not only a person’s physical concerns but her spiritual ones as well, began in Europe and was introduced to North America by Dr. Granger Westberg, a Lutheran clergyman, in the early 1980s. After years serving his community as a hospital chaplain, professor of practical theology and parish pastor, Westberg decided to develop a partnership between congregations and the local health care network. In 1984, he formed a partnership between the Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Illinois, and six area congregations and parish nursing was born.

In Canada, parish nursing began as early as 1992 but it would be six years before any sort of support organization was formed. In 1998, the Canadian Parish Nurse Ministry Forum represented approximately 40 people across the country, including parish nurses, educators, clergy and other interested parties. Today, there are close to 100 members of Canadian Association of Parish Nursing Ministry.

“It was like a light bulb went on,” said Beth MacKay Reilly of the first time she heard about the ministry. “Combining



Beth MacKay Reilly, parish nurse and director of programs at Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., checks Patricia Oosterveld’s blood pressure.

Photo by Laura Barnard

Christian education and nursing? I can do this!” Already very involved in the programming and work of Hamilton, Ontario’s Central Presbyterian, MacKay Reilly got her congregation to approve a one-year parish nursing pilot project in 1999. By 2000, she’d completed a course at McMaster University and she’s been focusing on health education at Central ever since.

“I see a person as a holistic entity. When something is affected, it affects everything else. And parish nursing is reclaiming health ministry in the church. We’re really treating



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the whole person, not just the 'appendix in room 10'," said MacKay Reilly. "In this day and age, if a person can feel at their church that they are being taken care of as a whole person, well then, that's something."

Parish nursing is developing a following and many congregations are reaching deep into their pockets in order to fund the program at their church. Rev. Terry Hastings at Knox Presbyterian in Stratford, Ont., is hopeful they will soon have a parish nurse in place. "We have over 65 shut-ins at Knox. We could easily have a parish nurse who did nothing but visit our shut-ins and provide pastoral care," he explained. Knox remains in the "discussion and exploration stage" of parish

**'We've been lax, as congregations, to let governments do these things. This is part of our calling'**

nursing but the idea is gaining ground. "We don't want to repeat something that someone else is doing. We want to fill the gaps of what is not being met," said Hastings. "This is part of our calling. We've been pretty lax, as congregations, to let government do a lot of these things. Now we're reclaiming that role."

Diane Tait-Katerberg, associate minister at St. John's in White Rock, B.C., agrees with Hastings. "If I, as a pastor, go and visit someone, they probably won't discuss medical things with me," she said. "But, if somebody comes in as a nurse, they have a certain authority to ask questions and to follow through. We think people would raise issues that they wouldn't raise with their elders or pastor." St. John's hasn't officially brought the idea to the congregation, though it's been talked about in newsletters and people are actively working to get funding in place. "We're getting our ducks in order," said Tait-Katerberg.

The role of a parish nurse is as individual as the congregation. For example, Tolhurst only works 12 hours a month but her phone line is always open. Some parish nurses work solely on education — informing congregants on health care concerns such as Alzheimer's and strokes

or providing updates on local screenings for breast, prostate or colon cancer. Morag Broad, parish nurse at Dayspring Church in Edmonton, Alta. (the only Presbyterian church in the city with a parish nurse), is paid for 20 hours a week but actually works full-time, collaborating with Rev. John Dowd to develop more ways to serve the community.

With a quarter of Dayspring's congregation in continuing care facilities or limited in getting to church, it became clear that these isolated people needed something more. So Broad and Dowd started a care companion program, matching active members of the congregation with shut-ins for regular visits and to develop a friendship. "People will share the strangest things at the strangest moments if you give them the opportunity," said Broad. "The sharing of stories and fears and dreams and those life transitions that we all go through is so important." With the care companion program, Broad and Dowd share the load of pastoral care in a much bigger ministry. "I feel very confident that in the next five or 10 years, parish nursing will be recognized as very important ministry. It takes that leap of faith and trying to find the funding to get it started."

Sandra Osborne is an average Presbyterian — private, respectful of other peoples' boundaries and a little staid. However, as a parish nurse for St. Aidan's in New Westminster, B.C., Osbourne has had to get over her shyness in broaching religion as an acceptable topic of conversation. "I've always said that God's got a sense of humour. Every time I think, 'Oh gee, I don't think I want to do this', I'm surprised."

One of her first hospital visits as a parish nurse was to see a devout Christian woman. "I knew I needed to ask her if I could read with her or pray with her," remembered Osbourne. "She wanted me to sing a hymn. In a four-bed ward." Swallowing her discomfort, Osbourne started to sing and God's sense of humour was evident — the three other patients in the ward joined in. "She was a minister's wife and she showed me how to put my faith out publicly," said Osbourne. "I found it very rewarding. It has allowed me to grow in my faith." ■

# Taking ministry to the streets

*Church isn't a vacuum, it exists within a neighbourhood, sitting beside other institutions. These ministries opened their doors and took their work into their community.*

by Amy MacLachlan

Congregations have an excellent example to follow when taking their ministries beyond church walls: Although Jesus did teach in synagogues, the majority of his preaching took place on the street, in the communities he was serving. It's still an effective way to spread the good news today. When Rev. Ramon Ramirez had his former church building in El Salvador seized in 1997 by his denomination (which accused numerous pastors and missionaries of being communists for helping the poor), the Baptist minister and his parishioners were out on the street. They began a ministry born in the aftermath of a civil war known for its death squads and terrorists. Those committed to social action took advantage of their new circumstances and began to work amongst the poor in El Salvador.

Meeting at first in coffee shops, restaurants, and the homes and offices of those involved, Ramirez and his partners vowed to correct the social injustices they saw around them.

Today, they minister to 160 men in prison, help 200 children go to school, and support and educate 60 impoverished mothers. They also educate people on gender equality — hoping to end the injustices and discrimination women face in the Central American country.

In many ways, it's not a big step to the Anishinabe Fellowship Centre in Winnipeg. Bringing people off the street and into a Christian community is how the centre has expanded the idea of ministry. A Presbyterian drop-in centre sponsored by Presbyterian Sharing, it is used mostly by Native people. "I think it's a



Photo courtesy of Anishinabe

Friends gather at Anishinabe Fellowship Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.





Rev. Ramon Ramirez (far left) with his theology class at a prison in El Salvador.

safe place to come, and the word is spreading,” said Susan Currie, an outreach worker. “Mostly, it’s a place just to be; where they don’t feel threatened.”

The regulars, nearly 100 people, are so thrilled with the centre that they have taken it upon themselves to help with the fundraising, bringing in \$1,300 since last summer, including a group of homeless people who donated a crisp \$20 bill. “They’re taking it on as their own project,” said Currie. “The sense of community is big right now. We need the room, so that nobody needs to be locked out.”

Opening its own doors to help the less fortunate is what the Church of St. David is doing. David’s Drop In operates out of the Halifax church’s hall, offering a warm place to hang out, have coffee and baked goods, a bowl of soup and some good conversation. For people living on the streets or those who otherwise wouldn’t have a warm place to rest, the centre is a welcomed initiative. Operating in conjunction with the Victorian Order of Nurses, there is also a clothing bank, occasional hair cuts, and a nurse who performs routine health care. Blood pressure and blood sugar levels are checked if needed, foot care is performed, and wounds are tended to. Between six and 30 people drop in each week.

“Some people may think that because they can’t do a big thing, they can’t do anything, and they overlook the creative ways they can take part,” said Rev. Laurence DeWolfe, minister at St. David’s. “There are all kinds of possibilities if you look for the connections you can make.”

Approaching its first anniversary, the program is an example of a church doing what it can with the resources it has. “It’s amazing the fruit that can arise by taking advantage of the things already in your congregation,” said DeWolfe. “This kind of thing is possible.”

It’s this kind of thinking that led to the formation of Pinawa Christian Fellowship. Using minimal resources to minister to as

many people as possible, the small church in the Presbytery of Winnipeg has members from Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian and United Church backgrounds. The congregation was “called together to be God’s people”.

For over four decades, it hasn’t had a church building, but has rented office, educational and worship space as needed. “It makes so much sense,” said Pinawa’s current Presbyterian minister, Rev. Robert Murray. “All the frustration about keeping the roof up isn’t part of the mix.”

Abandoning traditional ideas in order to reach more people is a necessary endeavour for Ramirez in El Salvador. With 48 per cent of its 6.5 million people living below the poverty line, El Salvador is a nation

struggling with crime, illiteracy and a sluggish economy. Left in a shambles when a 12-year civil war ended in 1992 that took 75,000 lives, the country whose name means “the Saviour” could use exactly that. Outraged by the state of his country even years after the war has ended, Ramirez shuns religion that is devoid of social action. “What God wants is love, compassion and justice,” he said during an interview at church offices. “Keep on with the work of God that he has placed in your hands. Nothing should ever go backwards.”

Rev. James Gordon of Amherstview, Ont. agrees. “Being the church is not to be inward-looking, but very outward-looking,” said the minister at Trinity Presbyterian. This congregation looks out via two annual Santa Claus parades which are so well known by their communities that donations of food and money are placed on the float to benefit the Partners in Mission food bank. Each parade

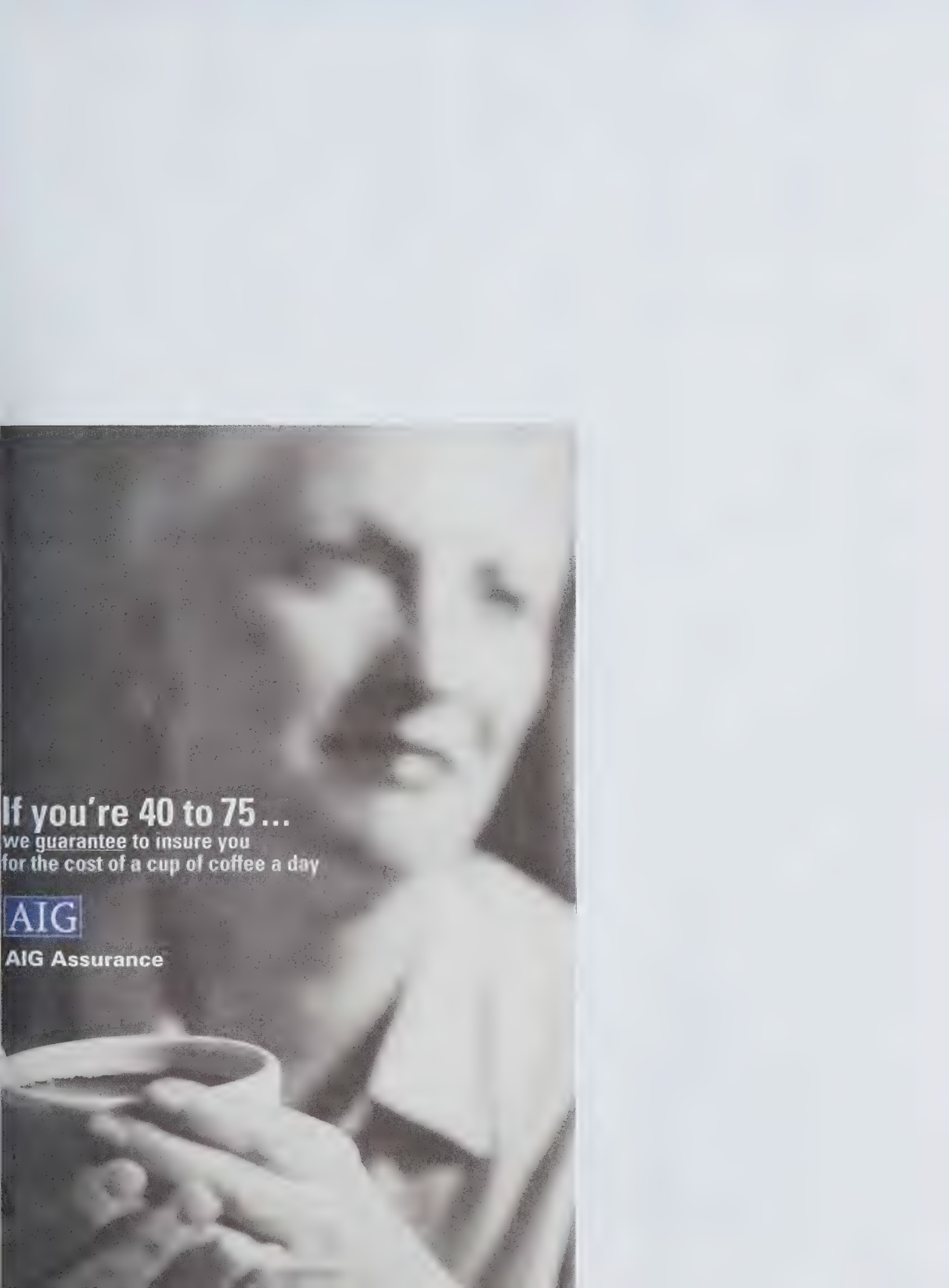
has raised as much as 6,000 pounds of food and \$2,000.

This local ministry spins out into many other missions: In addition to sponsoring a child overseas, and donating time and money to crisis centres and other charitable organizations in the community, their newest outreach project has parishioners welcoming people who have just moved into the quickly-growing area. A member from the congregation knocks on the door holding a tin of Danish cookies with the church’s name and address, and offering their warmest welcome. The strategy seems to be working, as some newcomers have wandered into Trinity to check it out.

It’s a similar kind of open approach that Rev. Jane Swatridge uses in downtown Toronto. “It’s a church for hearing and hospitality,” said Swatridge of the Toronto ministry, *fyi* — for your inspiration. “It’s for people who just aren’t interested in organized religion.”

It operates out of Swatridge’s home, and welcomes those who want to connect with God, but don’t know how. Often

**‘God wants love, compassion and justice. Nothing should ever go backwards’**



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they've had negative experiences with the church, or have confusing ideas of what the church is about. They may be plagued by feelings of guilt, bitterness, anger or fear. "I'm like the first step," said Swatridge. "They're not ready for the church community. They're not sure if they'll be accepted. But I show them that we have a benevolent God and a forgiving God, and help them get past their problems. It's not so much for the poor in pocket, as for the poor in spirit."

Like the healing that can happen at fyi, Anishinabe also offers a place for redirection and renewal. The drop-in centre provides monthly food packages, blankets and towels, a computer lab, a children's after-school program, and counselling. But perhaps most importantly, relationships formed at the centre help build trust between the Native community and the church. "We feel like it's a God-directed thing," said Currie. "Healing has to take place, and they trust us. It feels like home here." Sundays offer

a worship service that draws about 70 adults and 45 children.

At fyi, many people just want to talk. Youth on parole, married couples with relationship issues, homosexuals struggling with their identity, criminals behind bars, and people seeking God, all look to Swatridge for help. Alternative services are an integral part of her ministry. "I don't preach and there are no pews," she said. "It's interactive and there are lots of questions. In a normal service, you aren't exactly allowed to throw your hand up in the middle and say, 'What do you mean by that?' But you can do that here."

Not unlike the broken spirits in Canada that need a helping hand and a listening ear, the people of El Salvador also need to be healed. "The war affected us greatly. It was absolute hell," said Ramirez. "We need a great big work of restoration; to help people out of the traumas they received during the war, and help families that lost their loved ones." ■

## Music ministry takes spiritual risks

by Alex MacLeod

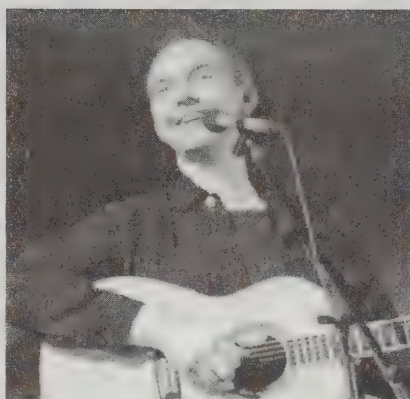
In June 2004, Glen Soderholm made an unusual career move. He left a good job with an organization he loved for a pioneering freelance position with few guarantees.

After 13 years as the minister at St. David's, Campbellville-Nassagaweya, Ont., Soderholm resigned from his position and founded Moveable Feast Resources to help the wider church address what he sees as its key challenge for the future: the pursuit of excellence in worship.

As a singer and song-writer with three albums to his name, Soderholm has garnered kudos for his skill at weaving rich theological strands into music that is at once poetic and simple. His most recent offering, *Rest* (2004), explores the theme of a sabbath refuge from sadness and fatigue.

Soderholm's artistry always tends towards worship. Rooted in scripture and often honed to a pastoral point, his songs serve something larger than one man's imagination. The gift of music he so clearly possesses led Soderholm to grasp a new opportunity to meet emerging needs in the Presbyterian Church in Canada and beyond. Moveable Feast Resources is the result.

"It's about much more than simply music," explains Soderholm. "We start with the most fundamental questions when we're called in. We want to affirm and encourage what churches are doing.



Then we ask how they understand who they are as the church of Christ and what their mission is. We have to get into identity issues and people's most basic understanding of who God is before we can talk about how that could send their worship in some new directions."

Moveable Feast casts a wide net. The most time is currently spent on a concert ministry in churches and elsewhere, as well as working with individual congregations to bring their worship into clearer focus. This latter project has taken off in the last six months with word spreading rapidly about the services that Soderholm offers. He has already run the gamut, from consulting with worship committees, teams, ministers and organists, to running seminars which the whole church attends. Retreat speaking, mentoring, spiritual direction, and song-writing workshops are also part of the mandate.

"There's a lot of openness to thinking creatively about worship. But people, ministers especially, are confused by all the possibilities. It's hard to figure out what's a fad and what has lasting value," said Soderholm. "All the flashy promotion around ways to market your church has been called by some, nothing less than 'ecclesiastical pornography.' I'd like to enable people to bypass the trash and help them to discover the new wineskins that suit them in amongst all the excitement and frenetic change going on these days.

"The Triune God of grace provides the response through Jesus Christ and so relieves us of a terrible burden," urges Soderholm, growing animated. "That's where we find rest. We don't have to do it ourselves; it has been done and we get to participate in it and enjoy it. A lot of our worship is in our head, it's abstract. There can be a better balance — that's worship as rest, play and work. Generally, we check four-fifths of our humanity at the door when we come to church, but there may be a different and broader way of experiencing worship. We'll have to take some risks along the way."

More information can be found online at [www.glensoderholm.com](http://www.glensoderholm.com)

Alex MacLeod is University & Young Adult Ministries worker at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto.



# The retreat experience

by Gerry Hofstra



Photo by Lawrence Pentelov

On retreat at Crieff Hills Community in Puslinch, Ontario.

Each individual's motivation for going on a retreat is very personal. Some are at a crisis point and need to make an important decision, some want to draw closer to God, some to work through issues and to seek God's help, some are curious, some want a place of quiet and rest, some come to unburden and others to seek renewal or more intimate contact with God. The reasons are as varied as the people. Though there is no magical solutions and problems are not always resolved, invariably the person is touched in some healing or encouraging way. Underlying issues often come to the surface as people learn to open themselves more fully to God. As issues are dealt with, the situation may be transformed or the problem may disappear. What also happens is that the presence of God becomes more palpable and life becomes easier to face.

The main purpose of a retreat is to facilitate an encounter between God and the person. Such encounters are unlimited in their variety. Many experience love and acceptance, forgiveness and release from past hurts. One woman shared that she had left the church as a teen but now in middle age wanted to return. Still, she could find no connection or peace in the church and someone had recommended a retreat. On Friday evening, she read a brief passage from Isaiah and she was encouraged to see it as God's love letter to her. The following morning, tears were streaming down her face and she could hardly share the overpowering love that she had received.

**The next morning tears were streaming down her face. She could not share the overpowering love**

Many times issues surface that the retreatant had not intended to work with or might even have forgotten. On an eight-day retreat, a recently retired minister shared her childhood abuse and how that abuse had been repeated at the hands of psychiatrists and psychologists. Her self-image was very poor. Over the week, she experienced the healing presence of Jesus in her early abuse experiences and began to feel as if a huge burden had been lifted and she finally felt free.

A professor at a Christian college had a few days to put in between conferences in Toronto. Having heard about retreats, he was curious. The weekend challenged him to the very core of his being. Considering his Christian belief to be chiefly a matter of the mind, he confessed that his encounter with God, over the five days, was every bit as profound as his earlier conversion. "How could I have been so wrong?" he asked, and "What am I going to tell my wife and my colleagues?"

One of the focal points of retreats is the awareness that we are the beloved, the uniquely created, formed and redeemed of God and that each one of us is precious to Him. Each person is a unique expression of God and is encouraged to live out of the potential that God has already created within. We live as if propelled by God into the fullness of that creation. Doing becomes an expression of being, of who we were created and formed to be. **R**

Gerry Hofstra is a volunteer at Crieff Hills Community, a Presbyterian retreat in Ontario. He leads directed silent retreats.

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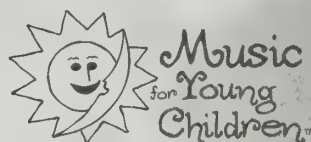
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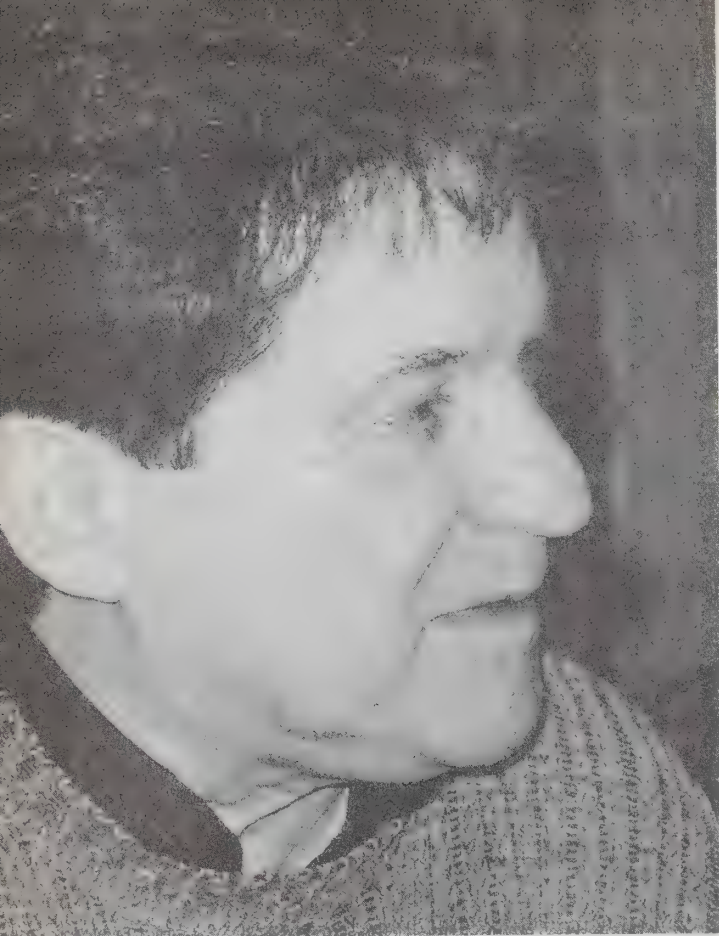
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# Brand Power

## Searching for the lost Presbyterians

*An interview with Reg Bibby*

For over three decades Reginald Bibby has been monitoring the religious and spiritual pulse of Canadians as a demographer and statistician. He has always maintained a distance, befitting his profession as a social scientist, from his data. But his latest book, *Restless Churches: How Canada's Churches Can Contribute to the Emerging Religious Renaissance* is more personal. Bibby speaks directly to churches, arguing they can win back their lost members, if they want to.

The *Record's* managing editor Andrew Faiz met with Reg Bibby, along with Jim Czeglédi, Associate Secretary of Worship and Evangelism, for the Presbyterian Church in Canada, last November.

**Andrew Faiz:** According to the numbers in your book, there are 409,000 Canadians who claim to be Presbyterians. But, our rolls say there are 147,000 active Presbyterians. Where do we get the names and addresses of the missing quarter-million?

**Reg Bibby:** All groups have to find their affiliates. Our data and Gallup data shows that those people may not be on your lists but they do show up now and then. So, churches have to start cataloguing those people when they do show up.

There is the demand for rites of passage, when those people want certain things done, be it marriage or baptism, funerals; they're going to surface as well for those types of things.

**AF:** The book struck me as a marketing primer, there's brand identification, there's a lot of people who identify with the brand.

**RB:** Remember this is your metaphor not mine —

**AF:** Yes, this is my metaphor not yours —

**RB:** Yeah, you're talking market segmentation and all that —

**AF:** But, at the heart of marketing is the product and there are suggestions throughout the book that people have not been buying the product or are interested in the product. Or the product is — the service, the ministry — out of touch.

**RB:** When people talk about spirituality they're just all over the map — they classify — one in two instances they're talking about God, they're talking about prayer, in the Christian tradition, they're talking about the person of Jesus. Another 50% are expressing spirituality in a way that is pretty foreign to some people.

They're talking about being at peace with themselves and the universe — they're just very subjective and pretty abstract things which are hard to get a handle on — very subjective.

When you think of Presbyterians and the way you look at spirituality and you think hey this is a great opportunity for us, well, you got to take another look at what 50% are saying because that is really different stuff. I think the point of commonality might only be the word — spirituality.

**Jim Czeglédi:** What I appreciated in the book, and Reg I thank you for pointing this out, is the importance of worthwhile ministry. Congregations that really do have worthwhile ministry, if they are answering the questions and meeting the needs of people, then people will work through their affiliate groups, their spheres of influence, friends, relatives, neighbours and these auras develop about a church.

**RB:** I have a sister in Edmonton who was not involved in church for a long time. But she starts out because she wants her children to be involved, she wants something good for her boys, some good values, and it's a telling thing that not only have they started going, but they have become envelope users in a relatively short time. The church has conveyed to them, 'hey we want to minister to you and we would like you to share with us'. Now she does a rotation in the nursery. And as her kids have got older the church thinks she has a personal gift of good skills in respect to kids.

**JC:** And in our church — and I'm being a little tongue-in-cheek here — we'd get her to join a committee, we'd get her to join a system as opposed to perhaps joining in the ministry, and that's what we have to overcome, because these people want to contribute to the mission of the church — and if the church doesn't have a clear mission, they figure it out.

**RB:** But I also think of the simple biblical summation, going back to the idea of ministry, which is 'feed my sheep'. You might find them but you better be able to feed them too. Can we with integrity as Presbyterians respond to the needs that people specifically have? A consistent finding when we ask people why they bother with things like church life they stress the fact that as they look at factors that contribute to their well being. Local congregational involvement is very important to them. People say, 'I want to get a little help in respect to personal, spiritual and relational areas'

**AF:** Relational?

**RB:** Well the relationships and the support they're getting beyond the service — the spiritual dimension and general support from church life.

**JC:** When it comes to rites of passage — more or less our experience is that they go and they don't come back — that's our challenge. And if there's a word to the Presbyterian Church that needs to be said, it's that we really need to expand our idea of Christian hospitality beyond people who are just like us. We have to think beyond that otherwise this is just a homogenous principle of church growth. We need to expand beyond groups who are just like us.

**RB:** Churches have to start thinking ahead. I have a friend who has a large congregation in BC. The congregation is mostly elderly and so they have lots of programs for the elderly. I asked him why they didn't have any child or youth programs. He said, and this was almost like a soliloquy, 'well we had a youth minister once and, yeah, I guess we had about 17 kids. But we decided we couldn't afford her and we had to let her go. And, the kids disappeared as well.' Or, give you another example, according to Statscan there are

about 50,000 people in Markham, Ont., who identify themselves as United. But, there is no United church in that town. So, those affiliates have no place to go. In each of these examples we see churches failing to reach out to their own.

**JC:** We find them through worthwhile ministry.

**RB:** And make sure the relational is there also.

**JC:** Yes, then people become naturally evangelical, back to what I call healthy Christian communities, healthy attractions, for example, having a positive youth ministry, if congregations can become like that then they become evangelizing agent in and of themselves, by the nature of their health and their Christian community.

**AF:** Is liturgy an issue? Catholicism or Anglicanism, people of liturgy versus people of the word, there seems to be a fairly easy level of transference for people of the word, but they won't go over to the liturgists and the liturgists will never go to word, because its too soft. Or, I should say, it is highly unlikely.

**RB:** I think that's a critical point. I grew up in conservative protestant circles — and the naivety there, they don't know liturgy and they don't know sacramental stuff and the only time they have what they call communion is once a month, and I can tell you from experience, being an un-ordained minister in those circles, you know how that's greeted, 'oh darn, forgot its communion, that's gonna be a long service'.

**AF:** Yeah, all the way to 55 minutes

**JC:** Trust me, that's not so different with Presbyterians.

**RB:** How often do Presbyterians have communion?

**AF:** Once a month.

**JC:** Often only four or five times a year — and I'm wondering if the antecedent here is our emphasis on Calvinism where the emphasis was on preaching the word.

**RB:** So you even do it less than Baptists?

**JC:** It's contextual, once a month would be the most, I would guess, the most in a

Presbyterian church and I'm guessing the same for United.

**RB:** Through my wife I've been going to a Catholic church — and I sometimes joke that the congregants there have come for their eucharist fix, you know, because I constantly find people who look like, literally, they've tumbled out from the party last night, there's young people there, looking a little bedraggled, and they're there for communion. Another example was two aboriginals one morning who were a little pie-eyed and the church didn't know what to do with them — get this, in that church in order to get to the bathroom you have to go through the nursery — so, where did they put those two guys that morning? They put them in the nursery.

One of the obvious question for Presbyterians, and I'm sure you're doing this yourself — is trying to figure out what makes you distinct — if we go back to the market notion, you know, what's unique about your company — what do you have to bring? Presbyterians are kind of in a funny zone, kind of Lutherans you know, Lutherans are probably more ethnically, socially, defined. But if I venture to poll people and say what do you think of Presbyterians, they wouldn't be mad at you, they'd say United, oh yeah, those are the people who champion the rights of homosexuals, and Catholics they'd see a sacramental thing, but Presbyterians, it'd be...

**AF:** We're everything to everybody and hence nothing to anybody...

**JC:** Yeah

**RB:** What's the plus?

**JC:** Middle of the road orthodoxy — our unique voice is our biblical theological reformed orthodoxy — that's our voice — but I go on to push that a little further, Reg, given the milieu in Canadian culture right now, what's the unique Christian voice? And my point is that the church really needs to reclaim this and this is the salvation model for us and Christ. And the church really needs to identify what this really means to people and articulate this much more, because people really just aren't hearing the message. And they can't see the difference between churches and other organizations. **R**



# The West must erase tsunami of debt

*It'll make all the difference to the Third World*

**W**e've all been supremely generous over the suffering in southern Asia and the tragedy has moved individual and government alike. So let's all go a little further and be just a little more generous. Let's insist that our governments forgive Third World debt.

Because that's what it comes down to in the end. We can shed a tear for the human pain and we can do our bit while the emotions roll. But if we seriously want to help we should cancel, immediately, the so-called loans we have made to the developing world.

I use the term 'so-called' because these are not in the strictest sense loans at all. Most of Asia and Africa was colonized by the western world, exploited by it, used by it and often abused and even raped by it. We had our way with their natural resources and work forces and, when history dictated an end to empire, we walked away.

Yes we did sometimes do good in these regions. It's sheer modernist nonsense to assume that every European or North American was indifferent to the indigenous populations of other countries. Tell that to a young British doctor who spent twenty years in an Indian hill village caring for the sick and the elderly.

The goodness of human nature shone through what was otherwise an inherently base philosophy. That is, the conquest of parts of the world by states that happened to have made more advanced military and technological progress.

A country like Sri Lanka, for example, was never allowed to construct an economy to cater for its own people because everything it did and made was for British imperial success. Along with India and the rest of southern Asia it was denied democracy and independence and then told, almost overnight, to become



Photo by Paul Jeffrey/ACT International

**If we seriously want to help,  
we should cancel immediately  
the so-called loans we have  
made to the developing world**

liberal and pluralistic. The miracle of the region is how democratic it has been able to become.

When Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the rest withdrew from direct empire, they began an indirect imperialism through economics and political manipulation. At its best this was a relatively generous but still controlling paternalism.

At its worst it concerned the encouragement of internal wars and tribal differences, followed by the selling of arms to the individual warlords and military leaders. Then a refusal to help because, after all, these people only fight among themselves.

Are many countries in the Third World corrupt? Some are, some aren't. And how dare they be! How dare they learn from people of a different race who ravaged and beat their countries, and how dare they try to find a way, any way, out of their crippling poverty?

One has to wonder how much corruption and how much chaos there would be in Canada if we lived on subsistence farming and if we saw our children die in our arms of diseases that were routinely cured in other parts of the world.

There is more. Europe and North America lent money to military dictatorships over the years with the absolute knowledge that they were corrupt and would spend the money on arms that they had to purchase from western arms dealers, frequently the friends of major bankers and politicians.

We knew that this money would have to be paid back by the people of these countries, long after the dictators who had borrowed the money in the first place were long gone. Our banks and governments frequently forced Third World states to borrow money, as part of an aid package, even when they were reluctant to do so.

Many nations in the developing world, including those devastated by the tsunami, have paid back their debts already but are still struggling with the interest on the original amounts. Because of this they cannot build a modern infrastructure, a modern economy, a modern existence.

The cancellation of the billions of dollars of debt load would make very little difference to the west and would barely be noticed by its people. It would, however, lift a moral cloud that has been lowered upon our house.

They owe us nothing. We owe them so very much. I sometimes wonder why they are not more angry at us. And wonder why we are not more angry at ourselves. **R**

Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# The first six years of life: They're too important to ignore!

by Dorothy Henderson

**W**hat is more joyous than the birth of a baby? Ironically, following this joyous event, congregations often neglect or even ignore children in the first six years of life. Small children are shuffled into nurseries — often poorly equipped — because they make noise. ‘Teaching’ of small children often consists of a haphazard and random list of volunteers. Yet these early years are *incredibly* important. Physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual achievements are enormous in the first six years.

Children have *much* to contribute to our congregational life. One day, during the children’s story time in worship, a minister reminded the children that each of them has an important part to play in the life of the church. Afterwards, a seven-year-old went to the minister and said, “I don’t think that is right. Look at my baby brother,” she said, pointing to the baby in her mother’s arms. “He can’t do anything for the church.”

“Ah,” the minister said, bending down to speak directly to the little girl. “Your little brother can do something that no one else in this congregation has been able to do this year. There is an old man who sits behind your mother and baby brother in church. He is *very* sad because his wife died. When your baby brother peeks over your Mom’s shoulder, I see that man smile. No one else can make him smile.”

Children are just as important as people of other ages. It is easy to dismiss this point as obvious. However, ask yourself this: does our church invest as much time and energy in preschool programs and facilities as it does in those for youth? A helpful exercise in this regard



Benjamin, Damien and Zahra listen to Griffin the moose and his friend Rev. John Ufkes.

is to look over your church budget and note how much money is spent on programming and resources for individual age groups. Having a poorly equipped nursery (where preschoolers do their ‘work’) is like asking the adults in your church to cater meals without a dishwasher or pots and pans.

Children are like sponges in their first six years. At an incredible speed, they soak up all types of things. In three short years a child develops a vocabulary of a thousand words and can comprehend about ten thousand words. In three years, literally trillions of connections have been formed between brain neurons. This is such an active time for brains that scientists tell us a three-year-old has more neuron synapse activity than his/her pediatrician. We have only to meet a three-year-old for a short time until we remember how many times

young children can ask the question, “Why?” Their curiosity and learning knows no bounds, so we need to give preschoolers lots of opportunity to learn.

Jesus took children seriously. In the Middle East of 2000 years ago, children were desired but seen as possessions. That Jesus would use children as an example, take them on his knee and heal them, is another example of Jesus explaining the Kingdom of Heaven by topsy-turvy. The strong shall be weak and the weak shall be strong. In his book, *The Family Story Bible*, Ralph Milton portrays Jesus cuddling a child and saying, “Look at this child. This child doesn’t know who I am. But the child can feel my love. And so the child trusts me. That’s what God’s Shalom is like.”

We take young children seriously because they are naturally spiritual. In her book *The Religious Potential of the Child*,



## Resources

- *Opening your child's nine learning windows*, Cheri Fuller, Zondervan, 1999
- *The religious potential of the child*, Sofia Cavalletti, Liturgy Training Publication, 1992

In May, 2004, The Presbyterian Church in Canada sponsored a "First Six Years Conference" in Moncton, N.B. Photos from this conference may be seen at [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca) under Christian Education/Programs and Events.

Sofia Cavalletti claims that early childhood is primarily a time of serene enjoyment of God. This may come as a surprise to those of us who have been raised to believe that the tranquil growth of which Cavalletti speaks comes with maturity of age. Based on her work with hundreds of children around the world, Cavalletti observes that, while they cannot express it verbally, children as young as 18 months experience a mysterious bond between God and themselves. This bond, she says, "exists in early childhood even in cases of spiritual 'malnutrition' and appears to precede any religious instruction whatsoever." She recounts dozens of stories of small children being moved to tears at the beauty of a sanctuary or atrium or the mystery of a Bible story.

Every 'task' that children perform in the first six years is one that forms the basis for a life of faith. From the time a child is born, she begins to 'learn' trust. The baby knows that crying brings a change of diaper, a breast or bottle, a cuddle. How is this a 'religious task?' Theologian James Loder says that, from early infancy, a child seeks to respond to the presence of other humans. What is established is "the child's sense of personhood and a universal prototype of the Divine Presence," a growing awareness in the child that he is born in the image of God. Learning faith, hope, trust and love is much more than a psychological wellness task.

## What churches can do

Congregations must respond to the first six years in the lives of their youngest parishioners. Here are some ideas.

- Provide support for parents/grandparents. Offer a parenting course in your congregation, ecumenically or community-wide. Many young parents have grown up in small families and have had little experience with small children. They have a steep learning curve. Marian Crockford, who works

with a program called *Babies Best Start* in Toronto, Ont., says that one of the most challenging things is that young parents do not understand how to provide good nutrition for their child. As incredible as it may seem, many young parents do not, for instance, distinguish between the nutritional value of cheesies and cheese. Many young parents are hungry for the type of guidance and support that can be found in a parenting support group.

## A child's work is play, and through play a child learns to love and share

- It is important to provide good educational resources for preschoolers. Provide curriculum that focuses on play, music, exploration, mystery. The recommended Presbyterian Church in Canada Sunday school resources for pre-schoolers are listed on an annual curriculum chart produced by the Education in the Faith department at church offices.
- Even if there are no or few preschoolers in your congregation, prepare and staff a nursery and pre-school rooms. You want to express to the congregation and community, "We value young children and we are ready to receive them." Recently, I noted with sadness, a young mother who took her baby to the unstaffed church nursery. Not only was the young mother deprived of a quiet spiritual time for herself, but also the congregational members were deprived of the opportunity to share in the faith nurturing of a little child.
- Modern parents and grandparents want choices regarding how their small children will be involved in the church. At a former church, we discovered this

quite accidentally. One Sunday, as part of a drama, we used a rocking chair and teddy bears. Out of sheer carelessness, we left them sitting at the back of the church till the following Sunday. A young mother stayed in the sanctuary rocking her baby and cuddling a teddy bear rather than take the child to the nursery. After that, we decided to remove the back seat and add several more rocking chairs, soft toys and bears. Within a few months about half the parents and grandparents were staying with their child in the worship area while those who needed spiritual quiet were taking their child to the well-equipped, nearby nursery.

- It is important for churches to remember that a child's work is play. Through play, children learn to love and share. Their vocabulary grows. Their muscles expand. Providing good safe play equipment is not an option. It is a necessity. Often adults are eager and willing to donate good indoor and outdoor play equipment in the name of a deceased loved one, especially if the loved one was a champion of children.

A little boy, hearing that his beloved baby sister needed a blood transfusion, was asked if he would give blood to help his sister become healthy. He was sober and hesitated. Finally, he said no. Later, he returned to his parents and agreed. They asked him what made him change his mind. In the conversation that ensued, the parents realized that the little boy had misunderstood. He thought that, by giving blood, he himself would die. With a little time, he concluded that he was capable of doing that for his sister. While we must not romanticize children, we must also remember that small children are capable of brave and heroic deeds in the Kingdom of Heaven. Not much wonder Jesus said to us, "Unless you can be like a child, you will not be part of God's Kingdom." **R**

Dorothy Henderson works at the national offices of the Presbyterian Church where she has responsibility for Christian Education and Ministry with Children and Youth.

Check the Year of Education website at [www.presbyterian.ca/flammes/education](http://www.presbyterian.ca/flammes/education) for updates of ideas, resources and events.

# Joan of Arcadia finds God in ordinary people

by Erin Woods

**T**here is a fable about three old monks living in a small monastery. Their home was falling into ruin and they knew that once they were gone it would be lost with no younger monks to care for it. Looking for ideas to save their home, they consulted a wise friend who told them the astounding news: *One of you is God.*

Not knowing which one of them was God, the awed monks started to treat each other as if they were God. Soon word spread of the tiny monastery where the inhabitants were so good to one another, and people began to travel to see it. In time, the monks were famous and the monastery was saved.

Except for the fact that she talks to God, Joan Girardi, of *Joan of Arcadia*, is a typical teenager. She teases her brothers and gets teased back, suffers and smiles with her friends and fights and makes up with her boyfriend. She manages to survive school with no more and no less grace than the rest of us, and her trials and triumphs are just as big to her. And, as it is for any typical teenager (if there really is such a thing), Joan faces a lot of choices.

Some choices are easy: Will she go on a Real Date with Adam? Heck, yeah! Some are hard: What to wear? Better ask Judith. Others are insurmountable: Can she manage to go on living after Judith's death?

Most of all, Joan and the other characters face moral choices like us. When her Aunt Olive makes her life more miserable than ever, Joan could have been miserable right back at her. She chose to be patient and eventually found understanding.

Joan, of course, does not always make the right choice. Spying on Adam one day, she sees Judith hug him and jumps to conclusions that make her sorry later. Lessons are learned, truths revealed and



Amber Tamblyn stars as Joan Girardi on *Joan of Arcadia*.

apologies made, but the hurt is still there.

God used to appear to Joan in every episode of the show's first season. This year, he has been appearing less often, but she continually watches for Him in the strangers she meets. Sometimes she mistakes ordinary people for God, but oddly enough, she seems to hear God's messages in their words anyway.

So maybe that's the answer. We, like the monks, like Joan, must learn to see God in everyone. It saved the monastery. Maybe it can save our world. After all, God made everything so there must be a bit of Him *within* everything: In stray cats and crabby aunts, and in the disasters — accidents, deaths, losses — that strengthen our bonds with others. He is

in our pain, which teaches us to appreciate our joy, and in our nightmares that promise an awakening. God can even be found in alcoholism, because it can be overcome and the sheep that is found is counted more blessed than the sheep that never strayed. He is in our fear that lets others know the peace found in comforting someone else, and especially in our love. No matter where we look, God is there. He is even in death; through death He brings us home.

I said Joan mistakes ordinary people for God. Maybe there are no 'ordinary people' and Joan was right to see Him in them. Maybe everyone *is* God in a way, with a little bit of Him shining through. Shouldn't we all be like Joan and the monks, seeing and hearing God everywhere?

God is in everything. We forget to look for Him in the guy who cuts us off at the intersection, the ditzy waitress who mixes up our order, that crabby bus driver, our political leaders. God must be in them too, if we only look deep enough. We can choose to look for the Good in everyone, the God in everyone. What if God is one of us? Maybe He is. **R**

Erin Woods worships at Calvin, North Bay, Ont.

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# Meat pies, fruitcake and running for a cure

*Baking ministry raises funds and helps community*

by Amy MacLachlan

**G**race Presbyterian, Calgary, is a growing congregation in the heart of the city. The downtown church with a membership of almost 600 grossed \$24,000 last year with its annual Christmas cake fundraiser. The popular project sells nearly 5,000 pounds of cake to parishioners and non-church goers alike. Going strong for about 40 years, the cakes require a mammoth amount of ingredients, including 100 kilograms of sugar, 145 kilograms of butter, 270 kilograms of raisins, 454 kilograms of almonds and 250 cartons of eggs.

The dough is prepared in the church kitchen, taken home by individuals to bake, and returned to the church for packaging, pricing, and selling. Cakes are sold at their annual bazaar, and are shipped around the world. "When I first came, I thought, 'this is rather archaic'. I didn't think many young people were into Christmas cake," said Grace's minister, Victor Kim. "But it's not just about the Christmas cake. It's about the fellowship within the church, and about mission and outreach."

The fundraiser begins in September. Hundreds of volunteers know the system so well that the process operates with "military precision", according to Kim, as supplies are unloaded into the church basement, including the hall, kitchen and gymnasium. Huge scales and giant mixing machines are brought in, and the process of organizing and baking the thick, heavy cakes begins as soon as the materials arrive.



**Several hundred people help with Grace Church's annual fruitcake fundraiser. Barb Voynovich checks on the baking process.**

The proceeds go to Grace's numerous mission and outreach programs. One of the programs the congregation is especially committed to is the Mustard Seed Street Ministry in downtown Calgary, which provides numerous services for the homeless. For 13 years, parishioners have prepared meals once a month in Grace's kitchen and transported them to Mustard Seed. Fifteen volunteers currently help with the project, adding to the 20,000 hours of labour banked by the congregation over the years. Grace's

members have donated \$50,000 since its involvement. "The people are committed to this," said Kim.

The congregation is also active in Calgary's annual ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) walk. Betty's Run, named after a woman who died from the disease, sees about 50 people from Grace participate each year. They regularly raise about \$5,000 for the cause. The congregation has participated for about five years, showing solidarity with one of their elders who died from the disease.

## How does your church define Mission?

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Since the walk is held on a Sunday morning, Grace's participants start off with a moment of prayer and meditation. The prayers often draw other runners, making it a witness to the congregation's faith and social commitment. "They finish the run and then come to church," said Kim. "I can always tell who was running because they come in their t-shirts and are all sweaty!"

The commitment of the congregation to minister in unique and meaningful ways stems from the church's mission when it was first built 100 years ago. Planted as a new church to meet the needs of the people living in what was then the outskirts of Calgary, the congregation continues to serve the community it inhabits — despite big changes in its demographics. "The scope of our work has changed, but the nature of it hasn't," said Kim. "Our mandate is still to serve our community."

The congregation at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Chatham, Ont., has its own idea for raising funds and piquing the curiosity of the community. Members of the small church bake meat pies — beef one time, turkey the next — six times a year. The pies are so popular that they have standing orders for those who eagerly await the homemade treats. Going strong for about 25 years, the pies are the church's largest fundraiser. Last year, more than 1,300 pies were sold at \$2.25 a piece, bringing in nearly \$2,000, after expenses. The money is used for outreach to the 12 different charities supported by St. Paul's, as well as maintenance needs that the church otherwise couldn't afford.

Pauline West, president of Anglican Church Women at St. Paul's, has been a part of the program since its inception. "It's about companionship," she said. "Many people, who may not come to other meetings, get involved in this. We support the church, and we're a family working together." **R**

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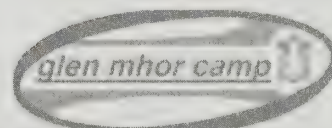


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# Parties, parenting and praying

*Best advice for children's parties: keep it simple*

**O**n Tuesday morning my wife and I invited 10 small boys to help us celebrate our son's birthday party. When I was a child I squeezed the front brakes on my three-speed bicycle while flying around a gravel corner. That was not a wise decision either.

As a herd of 10-year-olds swarmed our table, inhaling gourmet hot dogs, Jeffrey opened a wide assortment of gifts: Lego, water guns, an Angry People Playing Instruments CD and four gift certificates for video rentals. "We're bored," said the kids when the last gift was ripped. "Let's go get some movies."

I recalled the last time Jeffrey attended a friend's birthday party/sleepover. His eyes were bloodshot for three days. "It was SO cool," he told me from the sofa the next day. "We stayed up 'till four watching movies and playing Nintendo."

"Did you talk?" I asked him. "Did you do something together?"

"Nah," he said, "they had four TVs. It was really cool."

"Why do they call these things sleepovers?" I muttered. "Who sleeps?"

As the kids loaded the dishwasher, they also pointed water pistols at me and demanded that we rent some movies. "Did you know that watching TV kills brain cells?" I asked. "You guys keep watching TV and you'll be dumber than Silly Putty. I didn't have TV when I was a kid. It's why I'm so smart."

They stared at me with wide eyes, as if studying a real live dinosaur. "You didn't have TV!" they gasped in amazement. "What did you do?"

"Played," I said. "Invented things. Used my head for more than a hat rack."

They scrunched their tiny noses and said, "Let's watch a movie."



"Which one?"

They didn't know. They had seen most of them, but they could watch them again. They thought we should stand in the video store and look. I'd done that before. I didn't think it was a place for small boys.

And so I took them downstairs and lined them up in front of the dartboard. "Let's play pin the dart on your foreheads," I said. No one laughed. They sulked. They frowned. They thought of movies. Undaunted, I drew up a chart and cheered them on in the first ever Callaway Invitational Dart Classic. Soon the smiles returned. When the ice cream came they let it melt. When the rain lifted we headed to the backyard. "We're bored," they said again. "Let's watch movies. Tons of them."

I said, "Let's play Pickle."

They hadn't heard of it. Two of us donned baseball gloves and stood on

blankets. I threw the ball in the air, yelled "POP FLY!" and the kids tried to get from one blanket to the other without being tagged. "If you're tagged out three times, you're finished," I hollered.

The games began. Kids screamed. And panicked. And laughed. They slid ten feet on wet grass, then got up and ran like they'd been caught in Mrs. Pike's raspberry patch. I'd rather have kids than grass, I kept reminding myself.

"This is the most fun I've had in my life," panted one. "This is the best party ever," wheezed another. And they meant every word.

Later that night, after the children were tucked in, I sat thinking about parties and parenting. It's easy to give our children everything they want and nothing that they need, isn't it? We plunk them in front of the latest attraction that teaches them things we never would. Believe me, I know. I've done it. It's easy. It's convenient. But it saps their creativity and deadens their souls. Perhaps the worst thing about TV and Nintendo and computer games is not the behavior they produce but the behavior they prevent.

I wonder if the best parties aren't the simplest ones. The ones where laughter is heard and games are played. Where children are loved and prayed with and reminded to make the most of another year. My daughter's birthday is exactly one week away, so I think I'll remind my wife of this. In fact, I can hear her. She wants me to help her pick little pieces of china out of the dishwasher. **R**

Phil Callaway is a popular speaker and the best-selling author of a dozen books, including *Who Put My Life on Fast Forward?* (Harvest House). His new adventure series for kids is available at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

# Full steam ahead for Presbytery of Kingston

by Amy MacLachlan

The Presbytery of Kingston is like *The Little Engine that Could*. Sandwiched between two presbyteries (Lindsay-Peterborough and Seaway-Glengarry) whose numbers and geography dwarf it, Kingston has watched its membership dwindle.

Old, well-established churches like St. Andrew's, Belleville (1830), and St. Andrew's, Kingston (1820), each had more than 800 members 50 years ago, compared to about 160 and 340 today. Overall, the presbytery has dropped from 3,000 communicant members 35 years ago to about 1,800.

The presbytery has 14 charges, three of which have two points and only one of which sits vacant. The western part of the presbytery is becoming home to younger retirees from Toronto, searching for the region's picturesque landscape and slower pace. Their migration offers potential prospects for growth. Trinity, Amherstview, is the only Protestant church in western suburban Kingston. Thanks to a lottery winner in the congregation, they're building to become bigger and better.

Perhaps one of the greatest hopes for growth lies in the presbytery's attention to children and youth. St. Peter's, Madoc, has the largest number of children in the presbytery, with about 60 children in Sunday school. Nine years ago, only 12 were on the roll. Subsequently, the congregation contains numerous young couples and families — many of whom were drawn there by the church's young minister, Stephen Thompson, who coaches hockey.

When Thompson came in 1996, about 30 adults came to worship. Today, there are between 70 and 80. "We had a desire to fill the church, and bring in new kids and families and grow the Sunday school," said the minister's wife, Carolyn. Their commitment to family and the

community was highlighted in 2004, when a fire consumed the home of a local family. St. Peter's orchestrated a fundraiser and supported them through prayer.

St. Andrew's, Tweed, has had a recent push to involve youth in church life thanks to its minister, Teresa Charlton. "My strategy for growth is to start with youth," she said. "If kids find a safe and comfortable place where they get excited to learn about God, parents will likely come too."

On board full-time since June of last year, Charlton has made children an integral part of St. Andrew's through varied opportunities. The cooperation of the

Sunday school and music committee has spawned numerous activities, including a child and youth-only Christmas cantata, a March break camp focused specifically on mission, a community-oriented summer vacation bible school, monthly activity days for church and community children when classes are cancelled, music camps that prepare youth to lead worship, and monthly youth and child-led worship services. The building now houses a vibrant ministry — more than 40 years after local wisdom "stressed the folly of keeping St. Andrew's open," according to church historian Evan Morton. "My hope is that by doing a



At St. Andrew's, Gananoque, Ont., drama and music take centre stage. The congregation partners with the community to produce biblically themed plays, which are performed at the church. In 2000, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* was a success, as was *Godspell* in 2004. "We wanted to do plays with a high profile to teach Bible stories to the community and to go beyond our church walls," said Rev. Doug Kendall. "And it was intentional to include children. We emphasize the involvement of children and youth in everything at St. Andrew's."

The project has acted as a catalyst that sometimes brings community members into church. Between 30 and 45 people have acted as cast and crew in the two productions; numbers are higher if you include artists who worked on set design and costumes. The front of the church's sanctuary has even been redesigned to better accommodate the performances. The roomier space is also handy for the church's contemporary band, which leads worship every other week.



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range of activities, we'll hit a lot of different interests, and it will encourage kids to come," said Charlton.

Hoping to appeal to a younger generation and to people less comfortable with tradition, St. Andrew's, Trenton, is embracing new technology and creative ways to worship. Since only eight per cent of the area's population attends worship at any faith community regularly, St. Andrew's uses multi-media to draw a crowd, projecting its worship services on large screens and incorporating contemporary music. The congregation is also committed to outreach, running an evangelism weekend that featured a businessman's luncheon, guest speakers, and a free dinner at a neutral location for those uncomfortable with church.

The presbytery's ability to press on has been buoyed by several long-running, committed ministers. St. Paul's, Amherst Island, enjoyed the leadership of Rev. James Cumberland for 39 years. The lure of that congregation brought back Rev. Zander Dunn, who began his ministry there in 1962, and recently returned on a part-time basis. Formed in 1849, the stone for St. Paul's was quarried by inmates from the Kingston Penitentiary, who used sleds to transport it over the ice.

The two-point charge of St. Andrew's, Picton, and Church of the Redeemer, Deseronto, were led by Rev. Robert Jones from 1967 until his retirement in 2004. Deseronto was the town's first church building. Presbyterians, Anglicans and Methodists used to worship there at staggered times. The current building houses what is believed to be the last double-bellowed pipe organ in Canada. St. Andrew's, Stirling, has had so many long-serving ministers that only 20 have led the congregation in its 150-year history.

The commitment of congregations to each other is also helping ensure a bright future. "There's a lot of cooperation," said Rev. Doug Kendall, St. Andrew's, Gananoque. "We're fairly diverse theologically, yet there's a lot of things we have in common." Despite set-backs, the presbytery is pressing on, full steam ahead, just like the little engine that huffed and puffed along the journey but eventually made it to the mountaintop. **R**

# Christians battle over a sponge

*Left and right exchange in semantic pot-shots*

by Andrew Faiz

In 1999, Jerry Falwell issued a warning, through a magazine he oversaw, that Tinky Winky might be a gay role model. According to his *National Liberty Journal*, “[Tinky Winky] is purple — the gay pride color; and his antenna is shaped like a triangle — the gay pride symbol.... These subtle depictions are no doubt intentional and parents are warned to be alert to these elements of the series.”

There was the usual mocking, of course, by the liberal press. Here’s a typical article, this one from Salon, an on-line magazine: “Homosexuality obviously excites the man, as it did the North Carolina minister who accused Bert and Ernie of being gay companions a few years ago. Now he’s ... worrying that little boys across the country are running around with purses. It’s a ludicrous charge, but one he surely knew would land his name in the papers and on TV once again.”

But the charge wasn’t ludicrous: Falwell was citing reports, many in the gay media, from the previous two years since the show was first aired in Britain. The same sort of liberal mocking occurred recently when another conservative Christian offered another warning against another potential gay role model. James Dobson is the head of Focus on the Family and in January warned that SpongeBob SquarePants is gay. Here’s a typical media response to Dobson: “If the folks from Focus on the Family are right, it could make you, your children or maybe your furniture gay. Or tolerant.”

This is from a statement by the United Church of Christ in the States: “The UCC welcomes SpongeBob in the wake of laughable accusations by Dobson that [he is] crossing ‘a moral line’ by stressing tolerance... It is Dobson who is crossing the moral line for sending the mistaken

message that Christians do not value tolerance and diversity as important religious values. While Dobson’s silly accusation makes headlines, it’s also one more concrete example of how religion is misused over and over to promote intolerance over inclusion. This is why we believe it is so important that the UCC speak the Gospel in an accent not often heard in our culture, because far too many experience the cross only as judgment, never as embrace.”

Those are strong words but they aren’t about Christianity, the right, the left, or even about homosexuality and tolerance. They are demarcations, staking of position, closing of conversation — they are a hidden statement that marks the difference between, what are known post-election, as ‘red and blue states’. The language is no different in Canada: the one group towards which the left, either Christian or secular, feels absolutely comfortable being intolerant is the right. The same is true of the right. Little conversation, or ideological ecumenism, exists between these divides.

‘Tolerance’ is a leftist key-word, the way ‘biblical’ is a rightist key-word. These are both attack words, the way the two sides take shots at each other. Focus on the Family, just like the United Church of Christ, is an ideological institution. Both Christians, both on the extreme end, both claiming Christ, both pious and self-righteous. Each side is constantly on the defensive and on the attack.

This is from Focus’ press release: “While words like ‘diversity’ and ‘unity’ sound harmless — even noble — enough, the reality is they are often used by gay activists as cover for teaching children that homosexuality is the moral and biological equivalent to heterosexuality.”



That’s a direct hit from the right at the left — diversity and unity are bad. The attacks are semantic; note the subtle parsing of meaning. And, the left is no different. While embracing SpongeBob UCC decides to take a sideswipe at the right. “Meanwhile, the UCC’s recently released 30-second paid television commercial — produced to underscore the denomination’s belief that Jesus didn’t turn anyone away — has been rejected by two major television networks for being ‘too controversial.’

“Resistance to our message is formidable because we’re cutting against the prevailing grain of a society that is afraid of the stranger, suspicious of difference and easily seduced by narrowly defined theological boundaries.”

What nonsense. North American society is hardly any of those things. What UCC is doing is exactly the same as Focus on the Family: creating paranoia within which to sell its rhetoric. Money-changers crowd the temple from both the right and the left of the Christian and political arena. They should all be ashamed. Nothing is gained. In fact, the only winner here is a poriferan who lives in a pineapple under the sea. ■

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway Community Church in Toronto. You can contact him at [afaiz@presbyterian.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterian.ca).



# The Presbyterian Opinion

(There is no such thing, they're much too nice.)

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## letters

continued from page 7

two funds. These recipients need funds well beyond those received from Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D. It is why many congregations earmark other monies in their congregational budget for the colleges, Tyndale-St. George's, Action Refugees and other such causes dependent upon the part of Canada in which they are located. It is also why they support non-budgetary causes such as the Christian Children Fund, school lunch programs, Share the Warmth and other local and international causes.

To suggest that Presbyterians Sharing or PWS&D is the only way a Presbyterian can give is ludicrous. The late Neil Millar, when secretary for stewardship, used to say that the more opportunities people have to give the more they will give, and the more what we now call Presbyterians Sharing will receive. Look at some of the congregations meeting or exceeding their suggested allocation to Presbyterians Sharing and see how many causes they liberally support.

The present humanitarian crisis in Asia demands a response that goes beyond anything PWS&D can hope to meet. It requires that all the various ways of challenging our response, whether it be through PWS&D or World Vision or the Red Cross, be seen as valid. This is but one example of the need for co-operation and coordination between all humanitarian funds.

I also am dismayed that although the *Presbyterian Record* is supposed to be independent of the church and its organizations — not receiving any support from Presbyterians Sharing — some think it should remain under their tacit control. What next — no advertising from Evangel Hall or Loft Community Services, to cite but two ads in the same issue as the letters? I sincerely hope that you will not change your advertising policy to one based on a narrow denominational bias.

Harry Kuntz  
Pointe Claire, Que.

**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**

# called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,  
First Church, Edmonton

Easter is almost here! Easter is a time of joy, new life and hope because it is when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## Easter Hidden Message

The first letter of each answer spells out a hidden Easter message.  
Answer the clues to find out what it is! It's okay to ask an adult for help.



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**What a bunny does**

**When we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus**

**Jesus was laid \_\_\_\_ a tomb**

**Jesus is the \_\_\_\_ of God**

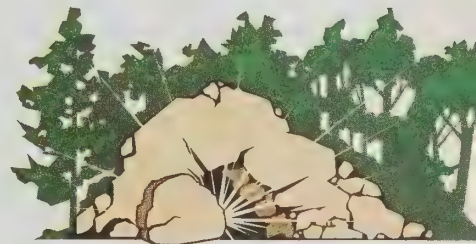
**Another word for bunny**

**You can hide eggs outside or \_\_\_\_**

**The season of Easter**

**What we hard-boil and decorate at Easter**

**Birds lay eggs in these**



**Hidden Easter Message (3 words):**

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Answers on page 47

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### Empty Tomb Rolls

You will need:

Crescent Rolls

Melted butter or margarine

Large Marshmallows

Cinnamon Sugar mixture

Pretend with the children that the marshmallows are Jesus. Roll Jesus in the anointing oil and spices (the butter and cinnamon mixture). Place Jesus in the tomb (the crescent roll) and roll it up so it is completely sealed. Then bake it as per the crescent roll directions. When the rolls cool, give each child a roll. When the tomb is open, Jesus has disappeared — He is Risen!



# Dealing with septic experiences

*A scriptural waste management plan for sin*

by David Webber

**D**ad! Mom just flushed the toilet and it's filling up the basement bathtub again. The sink is gurgling like it just had its throat cut too." There was panic in our 13-year-old daughter's voice so I knew better than to make one of my lame attempts at pastoral jocularity.

It had all started about Christmas time. The basement toilet would gurgle whenever Linda ran the dishwasher upstairs. Over January and into February this had progressed to said toilet going round and round and seldom down even after several flushings. It just sort of leaked away its contents. Then it evolved to sewage seeping back into the basement bathtub when you flushed the toilet. This was not what was causing the panic in Chelsea's voice though. It was what she had witnessed as I applied one of my famous Webber solutions to the stopped up toilet problem, a solution she was terrified I might attempt again.

After one particular toilet back up experience a day or two earlier, I had surmised that the pipes were plugged. I dumped a half can of Drano down the basement toilet and another half can down the basement bathtub drain. After I had things boiling away nicely in the basement, I took another can of Drano to the upstairs toilet. Meanwhile Chelsea had wandered into the downstairs bathroom to begin an occupation that teenage girls are famous for. Upstairs, I dumped the other can of Drano into the toilet, flushed twice and began to apply the plunger with great gusto.

The results were quite spectacular. When Linda forced me to read the instructions on the Drano can afterwards, I calculated I had overdosed the toilet system about 20 times above the allowable limit. That, combined with the head of

pressure from madly plunging a great volume of chemically boiling water from 10 feet above, well it was no wonder that the sewage did not drain into the downstairs bathtub but rather gushed into it with geyser-like force that would have made Yellowstone National Park's 'Old Faithful' proud.

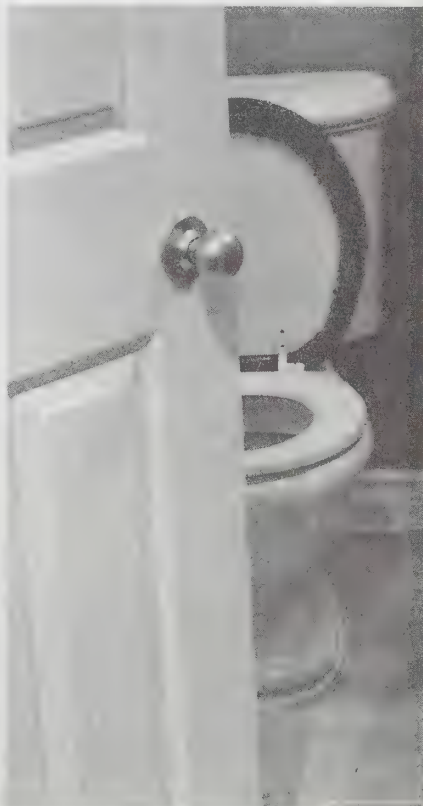
After I had finished collecting bits of toilet paper and other sewage from the basement bathroom ceiling, Linda convinced me to call someone who knew something, as I had satisfactorily demonstrated that I didn't have a clue. So I phoned our resident know-it-all who explained our pipes were backed up and clogged because our septic tank must be full. Part of the joy of living in the bush is that there is no such thing as public

sewage systems and water utilities and garbage removal and such. All the amenities of life are self-installed, self-maintained and self-repaired. And so, if our private septic tank was going to have to be pumped, Private Webber (that's the rank I hold in our family) was going to have to dig the dang thing up and get it pumped. The problem was that it was the middle of February and the ground was frozen like rock to at least three feet deep. Not only that, but I wasn't sure where the lid to the tank was, which meant not only the possibility of blasting my way with a pick through three feet of frozen ground once, but quite possibly three or four times as I searched for the blasted septic tank lid.

"We should have pumped the septic tank last summer like we were scheduled to!" said Linda. I left with her words ringing in my ears, a snow shovel in one hand, a pick in the other and a round nose shovel under each armpit. One of the great gifts God has given me is idea diarrhea. My brain just never seems to turn off. And so it was quite natural for me to spend the next several hours as I was mining for the septic tank lid, thinking and co-mingling life and scripture and Linda's last words that were still ringing in my ears.

Linda was right. Had I tended to the septic tank pumping last summer as it was scheduled, I would not have been in the hard-rock septic tank mining business in mid-February. This was simple waste management logic, if you don't get rid of the waste, it's going to back up and choke up the whole system. You can only live in denial of this waste management truth for a surprisingly short time, and then it is a huge problem.

It struck me as I was picking away at the hard-rock earth, that the same logic



that applies to waste management and septic systems seems to apply to the sin management system in my life. Even though I know better, I often live in denial about my need to deal with sin in a regular and timely way. Just because I have come to faith in Christ, just because I am saved by His grace, and filled with God's Spirit, doesn't mean that I have stopped being a sinner. Arguing against this early Anabaptist understanding of sanctification, John Calvin wrote: "... though purged by his sanctification, we are still beset by many vices and much weakness, so long as we are enclosed in the prison of the body. Thus it

### **'We should have pumped the septic tank last summer like we were scheduled to!'**

is, that placed at a great distance from perfection, we must always be endeavoring to make some progress, and daily struggling with the evil by which we are entangled." (Institutes III,iii,14) John of the Bible puts it even more succinctly than John Calvin: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

So if old John says its true and the Bible says so too, how do I stop living my life like I am not producing waste any longer just because I am in Christ? How do I deal with the cold hard 'truth' that I am still a sinner, and I need to deal with it regularly? If I don't, I know from past experience that I will quickly find out what it's like when sin stops up my life and how quickly a small problem can become a huge pile of crap.

Scripture makes it clear as to the way to pump the system, the waste management plan for sin that so quickly can stop up a disciple's life: "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) The rub is to become convinced with my need to be engaged in confession as part of my daily private prayer life. The need is to rediscover the grace of regular confession. I always engage in confession when I worship with other Christians, even though Seminary tried to convince me to stop being so "liturgically penitent" and

some parishioner's express a dislike for "wallowing in our sins". However the rhythm of worship is meant to model rhythm for our daily lives, and what is often out of sync in mine is the beat of confession. I am not talking about a daily purge plan that can in any way justify willful sinning, knowing that at the end of the day I can just confess and flush. What I am talking about is that at the end of a day of seeking to live a Christ-like life and sometimes failing, to take those failures to Christ and tell him I am sorry, to ask for forgiveness and the strength to change. What I am talking about is a regular healthy sin management plan for dealing with all of the sin effluent in my life that can work to set me free and keep me free and joyful. What I am seeking is liberty through the discipline of regular confession. What I am talking about is what the Psalmist so powerfully describes:

"Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be — you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean. Count yourself lucky — God holds nothing against you and you're holding nothing back from him. When I kept it all inside, my bones turned to powder, my words became daylong groans. The pressure never let up; all the juices of my life dried up. Then I let it all out; I said, 'I'll make a clean breast of my failures to God.' Suddenly the pressure was gone — my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared. These things add up. Every one of us needs to pray; when all hell breaks loose and the dam bursts we'll be on high ground, untouched. God's my island hideaway, keeps danger far from the shore, throws garlands of hosannas around my neck. Let me give you some good advice; I'm looking you in the eye and giving it to you straight: 'Don't be ornery like a horse or mule that needs bit and bridle to stay on track.' God-defiers are always in trouble; God-affirmers find themselves loved every time they turn around. Celebrate God. Sing together — everyone! All you honest hearts, raise the roof!" (Psalm 32:1) **R**

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

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## lives lived

*The Presbyterian Church in Canada has lost a number of faithful servants in the last few months. Below is a brief look at a handful of those no longer with us:*

**Rev. Jang Woo Lee** died on Nov. 26 in Winnipeg of lung cancer. He was 44 years old. Jang Woo's condition cropped up last summer, but progressed quickly. His congregation at Manitoba Korean was supportive through it all, holding prayer services and reaching out to his wife, Seon-Ok (Sunny) and their sons, John and Joshua. Jang Woo served in Oshawa, Ont., and Abbotsford, British Columbia before being inducted at Manitoba Korean last summer, four weeks before the diagnosis. His funeral was held on Nov. 29 in Winnipeg. "It's still hard to believe it," said Jang Woo's wife, Sunny. "I'm still kind of numb."

Throughout his ministry, Jang Woo was involved in mission work with Aboriginals. "He was very pastoral and mission minded," said his best friend, Rev. Gyeong Jin Kim, minister at Vancouver Korean. "He was a really loving person, and he wanted his congregation to be joyous and enjoy life in Christ."

**Rev. Kris Davidson**, his wife Sheryl and daughter Lauren died on Jan. 7 while driving home from Calgary during the holiday season. The minister of Haney Church in Maple Ridge, British Columbia, was driving his family home over an icy stretch of highway near Salmon Arm, B.C. Their van collided with a large truck. Kris, Sheryl and Lauren were killed instantly. Two-year-old Katie survived and is undergoing treatment at Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary. A memorial service was held on Jan. 22 at Haney Church. Prior to serving at Haney, where he was since April, Kris was a student intern at Richmond Church, B.C. He graduated from the Vancouver School of Theology, where he was student association president.

**Rev. Dr. Thomas Melville Bailey** died of natural causes in his Hamilton, Ont., home on Jan. 29. He was 92. The

founder of South Gate Church, Hamilton, where he served for 31 years, was instrumental in the creation of the National Presbyterian Museum in Toronto. He wrote numerous articles for the *Presbyterian Record* and served as its interim editor in 1970. His life-long interest in history was highlighted by his involvement with the General Assembly Committee on History since 1956. He served as the national church's archivist from 1981-1992, and was named Archivist Emeritus of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He was buried on Feb. 1 and a public memorial service was held on Feb. 12 at South Gate Church.

**Rev. Robert "Hartley" Beattie** died on Jan. 31. He was 92 years old. Born and educated in Ireland, Mr. Beattie moved to Ontario in 1952 and served as minister at Knox, St. Catharine's until 1954. He then switched careers and became a probation officer and social worker for the Government of Ontario. Still committed to the church, Hartley was an elder at Central Church, Hamilton for many years. A funeral was held at Living Spirit United Church, Calgary, on Feb. 2.

**Russell Merifield** died on Jan. 26 at Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto. He was 88 years old. An elder at Glenview, Toronto, Russell helped write the congregation's history, *Glenview Gleanings*. He was treasurer of the Presbyterian College in Montreal, and served on the Canadian Bible Society and the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation. Born in Chatham, Ont., he was married for 61 years and had three children. Russell authored several books including, *Who Said That?*, a compilation of The Empire Club of Canada speeches. He was also a musician and volunteer pianist for the veterans at Sunnybrook. A funeral was held at Glenview on Jan. 31. **R**

# obituaries

**Austin, Doris**, faithful member of St. James, Thamesville, Ont. February 4th, 2004.

**Austin, Syrenus**, devoted member of St. James, Thamesville, Ont.. November 26th, 2004.

**Bain, Shirley**, faithful member, historian and organist for St. James, Thamesville, Ont. June 28th, 2004.

**Kennedy, Vera**, 91, a long time member of First Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Ont.

**Leason, Mary**, faithful member of St. James, Thamesville, Ont.. January 13th, 2004.

**McGuire, Thelma**, faithful member of choir, devoted worker of St. James, Thamesville Ont. August 16th, 2004.

**Moody, Dorothy Anne**, faithful member of St. James, Thamesville, Ont. January 28th, 2004.

**Muir, Helen**, beloved charter member of Fallingbrook Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, Ont., passed away quietly on January 1st in her 106th year.

**Parney, Carrie Maude**, lifetime member of Turin and St. James, Thamesville, Ont. September 4th, 2004

**Smith, Albert**, lifetime member, elder of St. James, Thamesville, Ont. December 12th, 2004.

**Williston, Howard**, 88, a long time member of First Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Ont.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST. **Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: pcrecord@presbyterian.ca**

Answers to Called to Wonder  
Hidden Message on page 43:

Hops, Easter, In, Son, Rabbit, Inside,  
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Fredericton, St. Andrew's (youth and families ministry). Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; minister@sapc.ca.

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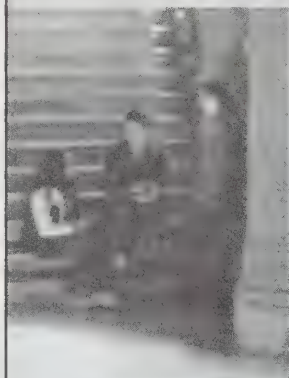
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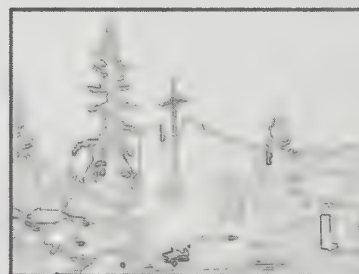
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# Acceptance and love are uphill journeys

*Remembering acts of horror is a call to action*

A profound sadness visits me each time I hear a reference to the Holocaust, the systematic killing of six million Jewish people during World War II. I wonder what can be said or done to commemorate that event today? We read books and study history. But is there something more that we, as Christians, should be doing?

Elie Wiesel survived the Auschwitz death camp and has written and spoken about his experiences. He states that silence and indifference have been the primary reactions over the last 60 years. Survivors silently tried to carry on with their lives. Returning soldiers did not want to speak about what they saw, or they found that people did not want to hear of the horror they had witnessed. Even today, many people and nations do not wish to remember. Only 138 out of 191 member nations of the United Nations agreed to allow a commemoration of the Auschwitz liberation in the United Nations General Assembly. Even fewer attended.

Few people have a frame of reference for something as horrific as genocide or ethnic cleansing. Therefore any act of remembering is a giant stretch. How can we relate to such events? Genocide and ethnic cleansing are now horrific realities in many people's collective consciousness including the killing fields of Cambodia, the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the Rwanda slaughter of 1994 and the ethnic cleansing carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But even being aware of these past atrocities does not alert the world to action about the genocide presently happening in Darfur, Sudan.

For Christians, remembrance is not just a mental activity, it is a call to action.



**Hadjé Simine, 37 years old, a refugee from Korney in West Darfur, near her tent at Iridimi Camp. "Even the clothes I had on burned when the Janjaweed attacked my village. I tried to find all my children during the attack, but I didn't succeed. I lost three of them, and I don't know if they are dead or alive."**

Beyond a profound sadness, beyond worldly entertainment, Jesus Christ draws Christians forward to an engagement to work for peace and goodwill. Lent, the traditional period of reflection encourages Christians to examine their own beliefs and to explore whether we are complicit in any action. The question posed by the spiritual, *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* should draw us to respond with repentance that, yes, we were there, complicit in all of the proceedings.

As Christians our remembrance of human history is to keep before us the inhumanity that all humankind vests on one another. We take seriously the fact that sin is in the world and that human beings have yet to learn how to live together and accept differences. The cross of Christ is the redemptive symbol for what God did to draw us forward to acknowledge the evil we do as humans and bring us to a place where we desire to help one another.

Lent draws us into the desert for a period of reflection and remembrance.

Photo by Blaine Ussing, DanChurchAid/ACT International

Holy Week encourages us to walk and to watch with Jesus Christ. Through these acts of Christian remembrance we acknowledge all of the horrors that we have inflicted upon others, individually and corporately. But we also commit ourselves to greater involvement in God's world to bring about understanding, acceptance and love. These actions involve an uphill journey. But we know that at the top of the hill there is a cross that answers and refutes humanity's violence in its most extreme and offers the way to life.

As with other Canadian charitable organizations The Presbyterian Church in Canada through Presbyterian World Service and Development, received outstanding support for our Tsunami Disaster Appeal. As of Feb. 15, over \$925,000 has been donated.

PWS&D is coordinating our response within Canada with other denominations (in order to ensure maximum matching of CIDA funding) and then overseas through the Action by Churches Together

(ACT) network to ensure that we are focused and acting in unity with the many agencies who are responding.

There is no scale to weigh human suffering. It is crass to base response to any disaster on the number of deaths. Christian teaching urges us to remember that the poor, the dispossessed and those less fortunate will always be with us. The thrust of Christian witness and outreach has therefore always sought to identify with those in need. The vast majority of those who perished were poor people living in humble dwellings in out of the way places.

It is obvious that Canadian Presbyterians continue to hold a strong theology in mission, responding to people as they attempt to improve their societies or when catastrophic disasters befall them. Once again, we are thankful that God is using our church in such an effective way.

*Lish Fee*

## Moderator's itinerary

### March 5

St Andrew's, Markham, Men's Breakfast

### March 5

St Andrew's, Toronto Anniversary Banquet with Moderator, Church of Scotland

### March 6

Eastmount, Hamilton

### March 6 pm

Southgate Presbyterian, Hamilton

### March 7

Meeting Moderator, Church of Scotland

### March 13

St Stephen's, Peterborough

### March 19

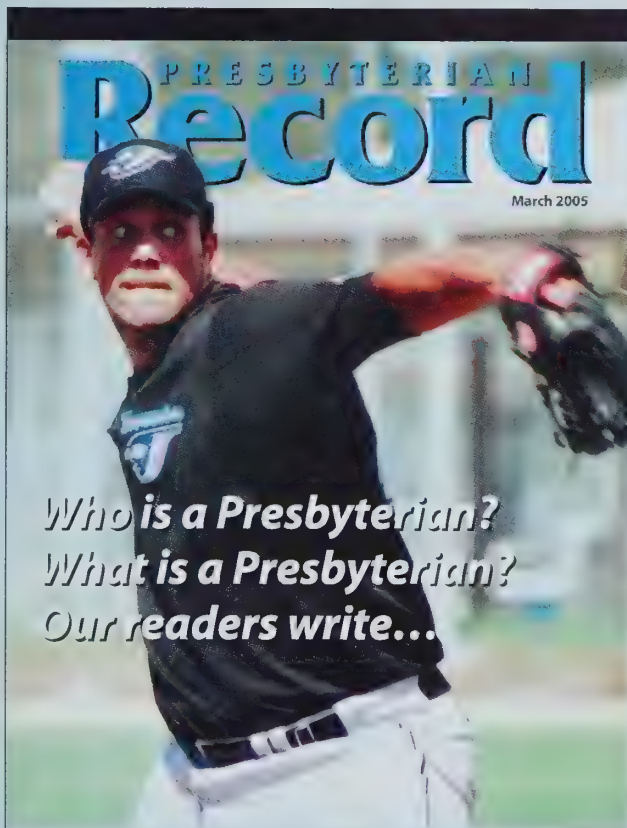
Presbytery of West Toronto Breakfast, Mimico PC

### March 20

St John's, Scarborough

### March 23

Committee to Advise



Do you take your faith to work?  
Take it for a walk?

How do you believe God directs your life, as you  
Play after school?  
Do your homework?  
Make dinner for the family?  
Do the laundry, then the dishes?  
Go to work?  
Think about a career?  
Raise your children?  
Take care of your parents?  
Wish and wait for hockey to return?

How does your faith affect your life?  
How does it make you look at the world around you?

## Record your thoughts for other Presbyterians

650 words maximum.

Photos welcome — 300 dpi min., high quality JPEG

Send to:

[pcrecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pcrecord@presbyterian.ca)



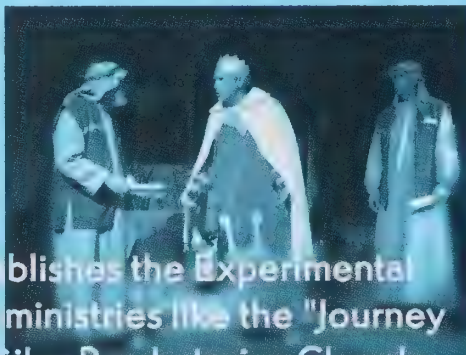
# Imagine

These ministries all began with a dream and a simple act of generosity . . .

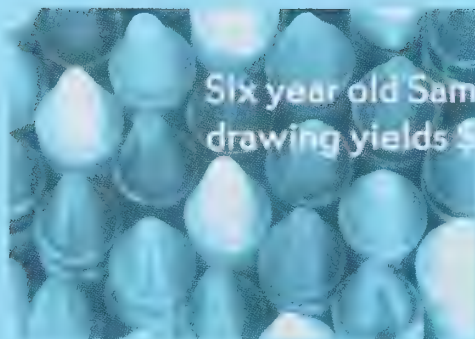
Colonel MacLean's bequest of 750 acres of land becomes Crief Hill Community & Senior Centre



A Schwab ministerial layperson establishes the Experimental Unit to encourage creative new ministries like the "Journey of Prayer" at Emmanuel United Methodist Presbyterian Church in the city of St. Catharines, ON



Six year old Samantha Mason's VAWA drawing yields \$10,000 for women's shelter



What dream do you have for the church that you would like to turn into reality?



*"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many?"*

*(John 6:9)*

## JUST IMAGINE . . .

a piece of land . . . a lunch of fish and bread . . . a crayon drawing . . . a portfolio of stocks . . .

This can be the stuff of miracles when placed with grateful hearts in Jesus' hands.

What dreams do **you** have for the church and its mission?

Contact the Planned Giving Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada to learn how you can turn those dreams into reality for generations to come.  
416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301, email: [plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca](mailto:plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca)



# PRESBYTERIAN Record

April 2005

## The empty tomb

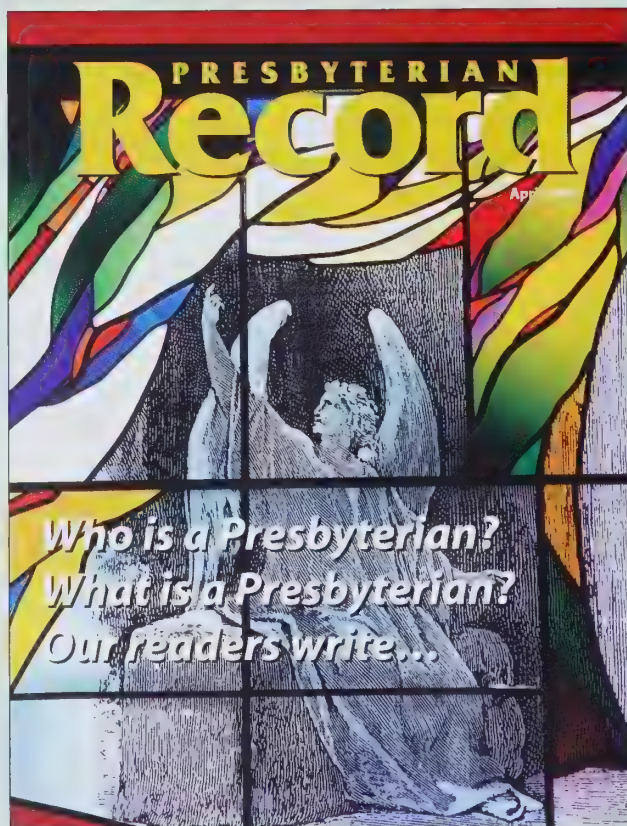
The marvel of suffering

by Moderator Rick Fee

**Alison Elliot**

The first female moderator  
of the Church of Scotland





Do you take your faith to work?  
Take it for a walk?

How do you believe God directs your life, as you  
Play after school?  
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Make dinner for the family?  
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Send to:  
[pcrecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pcrecord@presbyterian.ca)

## **Join the Record Readers Circle**

The **Record Readers Circle** is a group of readers who care about the future of the *Presbyterian Record* and are willing to share their thoughts, opinions and reactions about everything to do with the magazine. We won't call you every month, but we may contact you from time to time seeking your views about a story or a cover design. What did you like best about the last issue? What would you like to see more of in the magazine? We may even try some new design ideas and send them **just to you** to see what **you** think!

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Presbyterian Record  
50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

Photo by Andrew Faiz



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The post-modern, post-Christian church

by **Alex MacLeod**

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Scotland's Alison Elliot challenges structures and attitudes

by **Lee McKenna duCharme**

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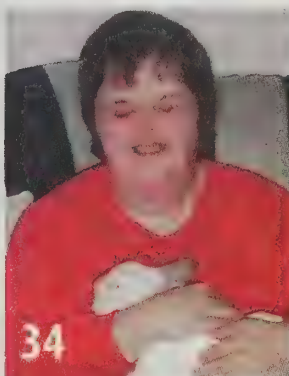
Students today, ministers tomorrow

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The marvel of suffering

by **Rick Fee**





# Community centre or centre of community?

*What is a church building for?*

**I**t rests there, survivor of several massive earthquakes, Latin Crusaders and the capture in the 15th century by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror who made it his imperial mosque. Arguably the greatest church in Christendom, Hagia Sophia, representative of Orthodox Christianity and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, dominating the skyline of Istanbul, surrounded by four minarets, is a museum. Ataturk, father of modern Turkey, ordered the designation in 1934.

Nearly 70 years later, the government of Ontario was poised to follow in Ataturk's footsteps, proposing legislation to give the province power to designate any building a heritage site and force upkeep on the owner. The bill was before a committee prior to final reading when the churches were alerted. An ecumenical delegation made a presentation and persuaded the government to discuss the situation with the churches.

Ontario's churches are collectively its largest private landlords, but it is merely an historical aside indicating how incidental Christianity is to contemporary government and society that they weren't consulted over this legislation. Indeed, the most telling indication of how society views churches is comments made by Catherine Nasmith, an architect and long-time crusader for protection of heritage property. "Churches don't have the title to the building," she told the *Record*. "It belongs to everyone who helped build it." This, she opined, includes architects, masons, donors and parishioners. "These buildings cannot be taken down. They're too symbolically loaded and have too much of our collective emotions built into them."

Ms. Nasmith's observations are, at one level, both risible and offensive. In fact, churches do have title to their buildings. And they no more belong to everybody who helped build them than any other building, old or modern. "Symbolically loaded"? Well, yes, every church, whether a grass hut in Africa or Hagia Sophia is symbolically loaded as the special dwelling place of God. Christians, and Jews before them, have always marked holy places for worshipping the immanent divine.

What Ms. Nasmith's comments do is beg the question: "What is the purpose of churches?" And the answer from Christians has always been that they are built to the glory of God as a place for worship, prayer and ministry.

Denominations do not build churches as secular community centres. A church may become the center of the community—in some sense, the people who built it hope it does become the center of worship and spirituality, a place where people

encounter Christ and come to know the love of God. And Ms. Nasmith is all too right in noting that many churches have too much collective emotion built into them. Just try closing a dying congregation to see how much emotion there is.

But as the country's demographics shift, as people continue to move from the country to the city and as immigrants from many cultural and religious backgrounds flood into Toronto and other major cities, churches that were once at the heart of thriving communities can find themselves bereft of members. Stone, brick and wood require upkeep, and there comes a point where it is reasonable for a congregation and presbytery to consider if keeping a particular building is in the best interests of the church's overall mission.

The most ready source of cash in many cases will be a developer. Now, no one who moves to Upper Canada can fail to be struck by the paucity of historic structures. Ottawa has little more than the Parliament buildings, Toronto but a collection of unmemorable modern steel and concrete. Heritage buildings have been razed to make way for office structures that are a testament to worship of money. So one can have some sympathy for Ms. Nasmith's position.

But one also has to consider the churches' position. If places of worship are to be designated as heritage buildings, if, in other words, they are deemed to be part of the fabric of the community, and if they no longer serve a viable group of worshippers, then it is the community who should be obliged to pay the church fair market value for the building. If the original purpose for which any building was built disappears, its owners, who do hold title (this not being a communist country), have the right to be compensated for their investment in the property.

A church is built for a worshipping congregation. Its ownership is controlled by the denomination. Ontario's government is to be lauded if it brings in legislation to preserve important historic sites. It must not do it, though, on the backs of Christians or any other people of faith. If society values a spent church building so highly, society should buy it. Perhaps turn it into a museum. Churches, though, are not in the museum business.

*David Harris*

## Nothing funny about violence

I was very disappointed that the cartoon in the February issue would be put in a Christian publication. Do you honestly think it is funny to hit someone over the head with a baseball bat? That is anything but humorous. Recently a crime was committed causing death by exactly the same thing. Please use more discretion in future. Christians don't purposely hurt others, and then laugh it off. Not the Christians I know anyhow.

*Robert Money,  
Scarborough, Ont.*

## Fall on your knees

Loved the Phil Callaway article in February. Falling on your knees is a great way to get through teenagers. It has worked for me. The Lord has now given us two hard working sons-in-law and a beautiful granddaughter. Phil's article is so true!

*Carol Hadland  
Prince Rupert, B.C.*

## Condolences for the Carls

Re.: Suicide in the Crystal Cathedral, February

I feel it was in poor taste to print this "news" without offering condolences. I lost my son in the same way. Depression is an illness. My heart goes out to the Carl family and the Schullers.

*Gladys Calder  
Saanichton, B.C.*

## Kirk Dunn a true and faithful elder

Thank you for the article and for the pictures concerning the artistic work of Kirk Dunn.

What readers may not know is that Kirk is an active and faithful ruling elder of our denomination. Kirk is not only 'sitting in critical judgement' on the church, but is rather playing an incredibly positive role at the congregational level. These days, critics of religion are easy to find; critics whose own lives and actions embody our hopes for a different future are much more rare. Kirk is a man for whom I have a tremendous amount of respect, and who is a living example of

what true and faithful Presbyterian eldership ought to embody.

*Will Ingram  
Toronto*

## Webber is timely

Thank you David Webber for your column in the February *Record*. As it happens, I was struggling to find a way of getting at the theme of Lent and Ash Wednesday, and your thoughts came along at precisely the right time.

*Jim Taylor  
Okanagan Centre, B.C.*

## Robin-less reader supports ball of fur

For those of us not fortunate enough to have the Western Wood-Pewee singing it's Lenten and spring song in our woods, we love our first sighting of that round

ball of fur on the snow, which indicates the ground hog has declared spring. I am sure you thought you were being funny, but I object to your juvenile, derogatory remarks in the first paragraph of your First Signs of Spring in February's *Record*. Punxsutawney Phil and Warton Willie bring pleasure to a great many Canadians who also don't have Wood-Pewees or even Robins to look at.

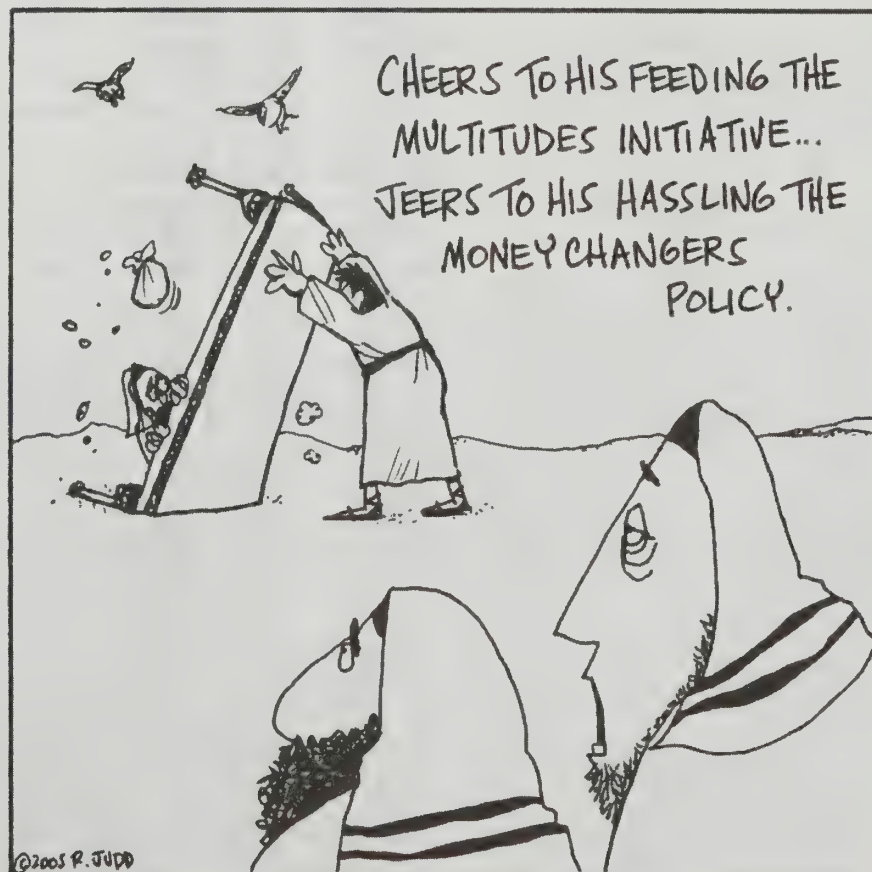
Regards from an Ontario myopic Presbyterian.

*Ruth Hemsley  
Ottawa*

## Fáilte bho Macduff do an Brocher

It is reassuring to glean from the January *Record* that the financial health of the denomination is now in the capable hands of a born (and canny?) Scot by name of

## LEFT UNTREATED





# PRESBYTERIAN Record

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Web site: [www.presbyterian.ca/record](http://www.presbyterian.ca/record)

## letters

*continued*

Margaret Bucknole. But if she has not already reported the error, please note that her birthplace was FraserBURGH not FraserBOROUGH — known locally in Buchan as “The Broch”. As a Macduff loon, born twenty-five miles west of Margaret, I congratulate her on her appointment and wish her well in implementing the proverb that “Mony a mickle maks a muckle”!

*Hamish Murdoch  
via email*

## Boon and bust

There is a God in heaven! With three children in university and a late start into the pension plan, it was such an unexpected boon for my future! When it was reported to my congregation that the management team at 50 Wynford had all now received a significant boost in salary (or stipend), they near unanimously decided that I was as valuable to them as anyone at church offices, and should receive equal compensation, and boosted my stipend to match theirs! Regrettably the only way such an increase could be made was by a reduction [BIG] in the congregation's accepted Presbyterian Sharing allocation.

*Ian Shaw  
Winnipeg*

## News item inappropriate

It was most inappropriate for the *Presbyterian Record* to write an article about allegations against Glenview's Senior

Minister, Dr. Robert Fourney (March, 2005). Very successful changes to our governance structure under his leadership were completed in May, 2003. This information could have been very helpful to other churches, but the *Record* didn't print it until October, 2004. The *Record* was very quick to publish the current article — before Dr. Fourney had any opportunity to clear his name.

*Mary & Bill Walker  
Willowdale, Ont.*

Re. the sexual assault charge reported in the March issue, I have two questions:

1. Though the complainant's name cannot be published, the minister's name will be forever sullied, even if the charge is thrown out of court. Where is the fairness in that?

2. You report that since the Sexual Abuse Policy was adopted in 1993, nine complaints have been sustained, and one person was found guilty by a court. How many complaints have not even been sustained in the first place?

*Rev. Bruce Cossar  
Kingston, Ont.*

## Vent away

May I please vent a little and make a few suggestions about our Presbyterian denomination.

Wouldn't it be great if we could have more openness with the Lord in worship

# The Presbyterian Opinion

*(There is no such thing, they're much too nice.)*

## A thoughtful consideration of social and cultural issues

If you have thoughts about what you read in the newspaper or see on the nightly news then share them with the *Record*. 650 words maximum.

Send to [pcrecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pcrecord@presbyterian.ca)

and praise — music-wise, of course; more freedom of physical expression: Praise you, Amen; God loves us; He is our daily Saviour.

Why can't we express our love and worship without feeling embarrassed? If God comes through others, why not let God come through me? I believe we should not grieve the Holy Spirit, but let him shine with our expressions of worship and love. I believe the Presbyterian church would be opening its doors to many lost souls who want to be saved.

The Lord understands our hearts and spirituality. We also should try to be more robust in worshipping our Lord.

*Eileen Shaw  
Hamilton, Ont.*

### More rural stories please

I was interested to read the articles in the January 2005 issue of the *Presbyterian Record* that were dedicated to problems confronted by people and ministers in the rural areas. At Melita Presbyterian Church we especially appreciated the article, *A Cow Is Calving... Thy Kingdom Come* written by our own minister, Rev. Barb Alston. *Ranchers In Crisis* also accurately portrays the problems facing farmers. I hope articles like these will help communicate to the urban population the crisis that rural people and churches are facing. Please continue to publish articles from rural communities.

*Marian Greig  
Melita, Manitoba*

### Each Christian family could sponsor one poor family

Re: Child Poverty Truly Threatens The Family, January

Child poverty is a meaningless term. We have children living in poor families, not poor orphans as the term "child poverty" suggests. Many, maybe even most, of those families have only one parent — whether due to misfortune, lack of extended family support, carelessness, lack of compromise or any of a number of reasons. We now have decades of well-publicized data demonstrating that single parent families and their children are more likely to be economically disadvantaged. Yet many young people continue to

play sexual Russian roulette and parents still divorce at alarming rates, often for largely selfish reasons. While some families are in need through no fault of their own, others are in need because of decisions they have made or have failed to make. Life doesn't need to be about failing, shouldn't be about failing, but about finding and following the individual plan God has for each one of us. As Christians that is part of the good news we are called to put in action, especially with those who need our help.

What if every Christian family in Canada with the economic means worked through Christian charities to help a poor family break out of poverty? The problem might be largely resolved and far sooner than waiting for our government.

*P. Wolstenholme  
Calgary, Alta.*

### Encourage not chastise

Re. Child Poverty Truly Threatens the Family, January

Your own bias regarding recognition of same-sex marriage is evident. You are entitled to your opinion. However, you not only denigrate those evangelical Christians who have had the courage to speak out publicly regarding this issue, but decide what priorities particular Christians and Christian groups feel called upon to address? Surely that is God's prerogative, for it is only God who knows the complete picture.

Your editorial exhibits the lack of tolerance toward those of different persuasion so well addressed in the same issue of the *Presbyterian Record* by Michael Coren. In addition, his article reveals the very practical and costly efforts made by some of those whom you would censure, to help meet the needs of others. It is simply not appropriate for you to try to decide for others what issues are of greatest importance.

*Olive R. Anstice  
Toronto, Ont.*

**The *Presbyterian Record* welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**



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## PCC MPs support man-woman union

The seven Presbyterian Members of Parliament have each declared their position on same-sex marriage. See their parliamentary websites for the full statements.

**Roger Gallaway** (Liberal, Sarnia-Lambton, Ont.) — Against — "Failure to define marriage as between a man and a woman is vandalism of our constitution."

**Charles Hubbard** (Liberal, Mirimichi, NB) — Against — "I'm with the government, but I'll be voting against same-sex marriage."

**David Kilgour** (Liberal, Edmonton-Mills Woods-Beaumont, Alta.) — Against — "The reference to the Supreme Court of Canada should be broadened to ask further questions."

**Jim Prentice** (Conservative, Calgary Centre-North, Alta.) — For — "Religious marriage is the authority of the church and must be jealously guarded. But civil marriage must be available equally to all."

**Karen Redman** (Liberal, Kitchener Centre, Ont.) — For — "Extending the right to civil marriage is an affirmation of Canada's commitment to protecting minority rights and guaranteeing equality."

**Gary Schellenberger** (Conservative, Perth-Wellington, Ont.) — Against — "Discrimination against members of any minority group is unconstitutional. We can achieve a tolerant, respectful society without changing the definition of marriage."

**John Williams** (Conservative, Edmonton-St. Albert, Alta.) — Against — "Marriage covers only one definition. A public commitment to a same-sex relationship should be defined in another way."

Amy MacLachlan



## They, like, so believe

Eighty-two per cent of American teens are affiliated with a religious congregation, according to the National Study of Youth and Religion, produced by the University of North Carolina and funded by the Lilly Endowment. The study concluded that "religion really does matter" to teenagers, even though their religious knowledge is "meager, nebulous and often fallacious."

According to the report, those surveyed — teens between the ages of 13 and 17 — described an undemanding God who exists to solve problems and make people feel good. The report also states the trend reflects the same tendencies as American Baby Boomers.

"I agree that this trend isn't unique to teens: it increasingly characterises how many American adults feel about religion as well," said Dr. Mary Kupiec Cayton, a history professor at Miami University and a

specialist in American spirituality. "Contemporary Americans are often looking to religion to meet their personal needs for community and emotional comfort. 'Belief' seems to depend a great deal on the degree to which these needs get met."

According to the survey, 52 per cent of American teens attend worship two to three times a month or more, 71 per cent feel "extremely", "very" or "somewhat" close to God, 65 per cent pray alone a few times a week or more and 50 per cent experienced what was believed to be a miracle from God.

The study also found that religiously devout teenagers are better off than their non-devout peers in emotional health, academic success, community involvement, concern for others, trust of adults and avoidance of risky behaviour.

ENI

**Teens between 13 and 17 described an undemanding God who exists to solve problems**

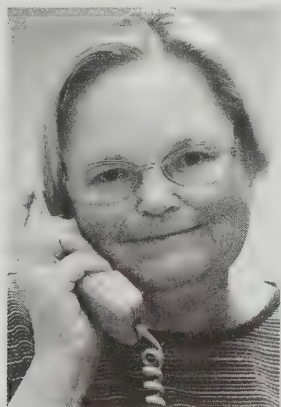


Photo by Art Babych

**Rev. Andrew Johnston (far right) of St. Andrew's, Ottawa, delivered the homily at an ecumenical worship service in Notre Dame Cathedral in Ottawa Jan. 23 marking the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." Johnston is president of the Christian Council of the Capital Area.**

## Leader joins the pack

The *Presbyterian Record* is pleased to welcome a new circulation manager, Deborah Leader. Born in Toronto and currently living in Mississauga, Leader comes to 50 Wynford from a full-time circulation position with *Canadian Homes and Cottages*. An active volunteer with the Girl Guides of Canada, she is looking forward to warmer weather so she can enjoy her summer home on Lake Erie in Wainfleet, Ont. Leader replaces Eva Breeze, who retired from the *Record* after 14 years of service.



## \$1M for Tsunami relief

Presbyterians' generosity to the Asia tsunami relief fund has surpassed the million-dollar mark. As of March 14, \$1,196,772 had been donated to Presbyterian World Service and Development. More than \$755,000 of that will be matched by the federal government.

## Fee nominated to head LMA

The Life and Mission Agency Committee has nominated Rev. Richard Fee for the position of General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. His name will be presented to General Assembly in June for approval. Fee is currently the Director of Presbyterian World Service and Development and Moderator of the 130th General Assembly. He would succeed Rev. J.P. Ian Morrison who is retiring later this year.

## Educator of the Year

As was first reported in the July 2004 *Record* Dorothy Henderson was awarded the 2005 Educator of the Year by the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators. She received her award at the association's annual convention held in Vancouver in February. Henderson is Associate Secretary for Christian Education for the national church. Among other things, she was honoured for her work on leadership development and intergenerational worship resources.



# Old buildings, poor congregations

*Preserve them and pay for them, says Ontario report*

by Amy MacLachlan

**C**hurches in Ontario are trying to persuade the government to change a proposed law that could, if passed, let the province designate a property as a heritage site and saddle the owners with the upkeep — even if a congregation is no longer viable. Only a last-minute intervention in Dec. by an ecumenical delegation prevented a third and final reading of proposed changes to the Heritage Act from becoming law. Churches were not consulted during the legislative planning process, said Archdeacon Harry Huskins, an Anglican Church representative. “The government assumed that churches were backed by large national denominations with millions of dollars to maintain these buildings,” said Huskins. “They didn’t realize that the money comes in on the plate one Sunday and goes out the next.”

Thanks to the churches’ opposition last year, talks between the Ministry of Culture and Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Church representatives are currently ongoing.

The Presbyterian Church’s synod of Toronto and Kingston supports the churches’ position. “We’re not opposed to the heritage designation,” said synod clerk Rev. Jeffrey Smith. “But we’re looking for some kind of financial help to maintain these buildings. There’s nothing in the changes that speak to that.”

The act assumes that buildings designated as heritage sites are commercial or government properties that have the financial backing to maintain them. “It did not consider that churches may not have that ability,” said Smith.

The current Heritage Act is unchanged since it was passed in 1975. The McGuinty government brought the act to the house for its first reading in April 2004, proposing changes that would give better protection to heritage properties.

Currently, the act can only delay demolition of old buildings, giving owners time to find another solution. The changes could protect the building from demolition indefinitely.

In addition, the proposed amendments would include an appeal process to respect the rights of property owners — something Huskins said has needed revision for some time. The current format lacks criteria for appeals and judgments. Furthermore, most small congregations can’t afford the hefty price tag of hiring a lawyer and technical experts needed to

**Governments don’t realize that money comes in on the plate one Sunday, and goes out the next**

make a case to the Ontario Municipal Board. Government and various churches are currently discussing how the appeals process can be improved.

Supporters of Bill 60 say heritage properties add to the culture of a city, and are evidence of the community’s roots and history. Such history must be protected from developers wanting to build lucrative high-rises. A small-scale example is Chalmers Presbyterian Church in Toronto. It was demolished in the ‘60s and a variety store now sits in its place. According to a spokeswoman at the Ministry of Culture, there are 54 religious properties in Ontario — meaning a church or manse — identified as Presbyterian. “There was a real concern that developers were using some weak parts of the act, before anything was able to be done to stop them,” said Huskins. “We fully support tightening this up, but there were unintended consequences to churches.”

Catherine Nasmith, an architect and vice president of the Architectural Con-

servancy of Ontario, is angered by the opposition to the bill. She said protecting heritage buildings should be a top priority for communities, and churches are disrupting 30 years of hard work to give the current act more bite. “Churches don’t have the title to the building; it belongs to everyone who helped build it.” This includes architects, masons, investors, donors and parishioners. “These buildings cannot be taken down. They’re too symbolically loaded and have too much of our collective emotions built into them.”

Problems stem from dwindling congregations’ inability to maintain their large, old buildings. Selling the building to save money and put it towards ministry instead of maintenance is a strategy many churches have adopted over the years. Although not often the case in rural areas, some Toronto churches have been able to take advantage of unique urban situations. Several decades ago, the congregation at St. Andrew’s, King St., sold their air rights to a developer who wanted to build beyond height regulations. The move was approved by the city. The church has used the funds to refurbish the church and develop an inner-city mission.

Nasmith said if the churches’ problem is financial, laws should be put in place that first protect heritage properties as cultural assets, and financial supports should be created for those entrusted with caring for historic sites.

Huskins said the current discussions between the government and churches are being done “in good faith”, and if all goes well, it is hoped the act will make it to the house for its third reading on March 29. “There is a need for churches and the government to discuss how to handle these difficult situations,” said Huskins. “We’re not in conflict. There are solutions.” ■



## All-inclusive chaplain's badge might replace Maltese cross

Military chaplains may soon have to wear insignias on their uniforms that will apply to all faiths. Chaplains currently wear a Maltese Cross on their caps — a feature of the badge worn by all Canadian forces chaplains since the three services united in 1968. "It's still in the development stage, but we're seriously considering it," said Col. Stan Johnstone, director of chaplain policy, at the Chaplain's General Office.

The decision was prompted by the hiring of a Muslim chaplain in 2003 by the Canadian Forces. "Since we became an interfaith branch, we should have a badge under which all can serve without compromising their identity," said Johnstone. Whether a new cap badge is adopted or not, chaplains of all faiths will continue to wear a faith identifier elsewhere on their uniforms. Christians will bear a simple cross, Muslims a crescent, and a Star of David for Jewish rabbis. To further include all faiths, chaplains have been asked to be sensitive to other faiths when ministering in diverse settings, and say prayers that are as inclusive as possible.

The new symbol will also be used on the flag at the office of the Chaplain General in Ottawa. Johnstone said the response to the proposed change has been unprecedented. Several MPs have spoken against the change, arguing that most chaplains are Christian and using a more generic symbol will fail to reflect that identity.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada employs nine full-time military chaplains, with four in reserve. *AM*

*I was hungry, and you gave me food...*

Photo: Bella Lam, PWS&D



**Members from the African Inland Church of Tanzania help distribute maize (corn) to communities affected by drought in Kishapu, Shinyanga, northern Tanzania.**

The sun was high in the sky as people from Kishapu gathered to collect the final rations of maize and beans. Seventy-five percent of their crops had been lost in the severe drought that hit this region in 2004. Without this food distribution they would have had nothing to eat. Patiently everyone waited as each families' share was carefully measured out and distributed.

PWS&D, together with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is working with the Africa Inland Church of Tanzania (AICT) to help community members in Kishapu, Shinyanga, northern Tanzania develop long-term food security strategies to increase local food production, and cope with chronic drought. Drought resistant sorghum seeds and farm tools are helping over 5,800 people prepare for a new harvest, while free distributions of maize and beans are helping them survive until the new crops are ready.

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## PC(USA), WCC use divestment in Israel

In the midst of peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, several organizations have been criticised for trumpeting divestment in companies involved in the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Moshe Fox, an Israeli embassy official in the United States, was quoted by the Jerusalem Post as saying: "While maintaining that this recommendation is neither one-sided nor anti-Jewish, it is clearly both."

The controversial strategy was first publicized by the Presbyterian Church (USA), when the church's stated clerk, Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, announced the decision that was made at their general assembly last summer.

More recently, the World Council of Churches urged its 347 member churches at a Feb. meeting in Geneva to consider similar economic measures. "This action is commendable in both method and manner, uses criteria rooted in faith, and calls members to 'do things that make for peace'," the WCC committee said, referring to a biblical text (Luke 19:42).

"We are very troubled by this decision," said Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mark Regev. "We don't see

this sort of one-sided decision as being at all helpful and constructive when there is new hope, and when Israel has decided to pull out of Gaza and take down settlements in part of the West Bank."

The U.S.-based Presbyterians Concerned for Jewish and Christian Relations urged PC(USA) to reconsider the decision. While affirming the use of divestment as a social justice strategy in

some situations, the group argues that such actions single out Israel as the object of the divestment policy.

Presbyterian leaders have denied such accu-

sations. Rev. Marion McClure, director of PC(USA)'s worldwide ministries division, said the divestment guidelines "allow us to look at any company profiting from the violation of human rights and international law, whether Israeli, Palestinian, or anyone else."

The US-based Anti-Defamation League said the WCC statement was "based on a biased one-sided interpretation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," and that divestment policies were "counterproductive and detrimental to the newly revived peace initiative".

ENI

### 'We are very troubled by this decision'

Mark Regev

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson

## Clarification

A story in the March issue on executive salary increases at the church's national offices should have noted that pay raises for associate secretaries slated to begin next January are contingent upon acceptance of a proposal from Assembly Council to General Assembly that would cement responsibility for setting national staff compensation with the council.

Council's mandate already includes coordinating budgets, recommending policy and "final responsibility in matters financial under the authority of the General Assembly." Council has acknowledged assembly's right to have the final

word, but supports its mandate to handle such financial matters on its own. To clarify the relationship between the two bodies, a task force was created to work on a policy document for guidance in such matters. The policy will be presented to this year's assembly.

The original article also neglected to mention that Rev. George Malcolm is convener of the Assembly Council.

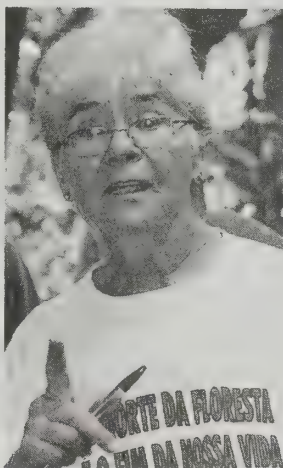
Since last month's story, the board of directors of the Presbyterian Record Inc. voted at the March annual meeting to continue precedent and match executive pay to that of general secretaries.

## Activist nun murdered in Brazil

In the midst of rising violence in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, an American nun was shot dead by what are believed to be contract killers. Dorothy Stang, a 74-year-old missionary living in Brazil for 30 years, worked to defend the forest and peasant farmers from illegal ranchers, loggers and landowners.

Police reports say the Ohio native was shot in the back three times and once in the head while working at a settlement near the town of Anapu in Para state. Thousands of the peasants she assisted and struggled with over the decades attended her funeral on Feb. 15, three days after her death. They complained about what they think to be minimal government reaction to the tragedy.

The area has come to be called Brazil's Gaza strip. Fighting for land is at



the crux of the conflict. Brazil had its worst rural violence in 2003 — Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's first year as president — when land was promised to 400,000 poor families. Current landowners at the time readied their guns to protect their land from migrating peasants who were looking to claim the government offer.

Since then, little has been done to punish lawbreakers, and Stang's murder has increased the fighting. The president sent 2,000 army troops to Para to help quell the conflict, and called for a federal crackdown on the illegal actions taking place in the region. An investigative team was also deployed to probe the nun's death. Police, however, are pessimistic about finding her killers.

AM

## Gender violence a weapon of war

Churches in Africa are being urged to speak out more forcefully about sexual violence against women, an issue highlighted by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Speaking at a United Nations conference in New York, Annan said there has been progress in the past decade with regards to women's rights, but further action is needed to stop violence against women. "That means leadership in showing, by example, that when it comes to violence against women and girls, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses."

In a response to such urgency, the Kenyan-based Tamar Campaign was recently launched in Nairobi. The initiative is named after the Biblical figure Tamar who was raped by her half brother Amnon. (2 Samuel 13) "Gender violence is escalating," said Rev. Fred Nyabera, acting director of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the

Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. "Sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war. The Church has a moral obligation to respond to this."

Rev. Nyambura Njoroge, a minister with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya and a program executive of the World Council of Churches, said clergy have a responsibility to speak out about sexual violence against members of their churches.

"It is a scandal, unacceptable and sinful that those set apart to invite parents, guardians and believers to bring children for dedication and baptism remain silent when their bodies are violated and left for dead."

Critics have said the mostly-male church leadership in Kenya has been largely silent about reports of child sexual molestation, incest and rape.

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# people & places

Mary Chapman's husband, kids, and grand-kids are eager to help her finish the cake presented by Atwood Presbyterian, Atwood, Ont. for her 40 years of faithful service as church organist. That little Laura at the front was particularly helpful.

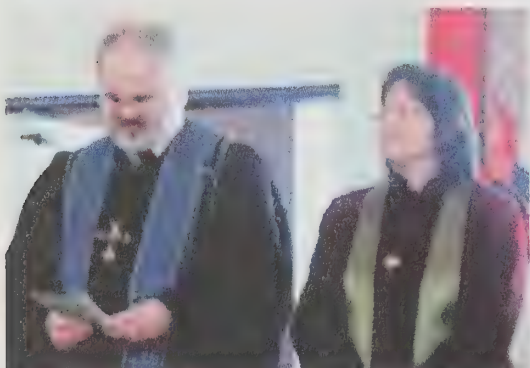


Knox Preston, Cambridge, Ont., collected over 200 pairs of socks on Sock Sunday for their Out of The Cold program. Seen with the booty are Carol White and Rev. Bill Bynum.



The 20 anniversary of Vacation Bible School at the West River, Durham, N.S., last summer. An average of two dozen children spent a week at the Davy and Goliath Camp, and raised \$166.40 for the Pictou County Help Line.

From Western Pennsylvania to Knox, Bobcaygeon, Ont., partners in pastoring Paul and Carey Jo Johnston are inducted into their new charge.



## Had cake lately?

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To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified.

The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.

Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.





Here's a recipe for evangelizing: take about 80 children, and teach them Bible stories by having them act them out in a summer drama camp. Here's a recipe for fun: have the children learn lines, music and songs, and make props and costumes. For the full recipe, get in touch with the spiritual chefs at St. Columba, Parksville, B.C.



Bob Gaede is the keeper of the original 1870 lock and key at Chalmers, Winterbourne, Ont. Here he's preparing for the general public, over 5,000 of whom toured historic buildings during the Open Doors weekend last fall in the Region of Waterloo.



Harold Kerr, center, was born in a log house on the banks of the Chateauguay River nearly 95 years ago. Over the years he has served Ormstown, Que., in a variety of different ways, including singing in the choir, along with his wife Isabel, for half a century. When he was the church custodian he had to come in on Saturday nights to light the fire, so the church would have earthly warmth for Sunday service. Clerk of Session Karen D'Aoust and Rev. John McPhadden congratulate Harold on the occasion of his 94 birthday.

Len and Lois Taylor just wanted to share this nice picture of a mother duck and her ducklings, which they took from a friend's dock near Huntsville, Ont. Thank you, Len and Lois.





These young mission workers at St. Timothy's, Ottawa, church school raised \$401.45 for "Sights4Kids" a program of Christian Blind Mission International which helps provide sight to children living in the poorest countries in the world. Two toonies can give sight to one child by providing powerful glasses or medicine to help fight eye infections.



Calvin, Halifax, celebrated both its 47 anniversary and Remembrance Day last November with a wreath of poppies carried in by the children. Guest preacher Sandy McDonald, left, Bill Arnold, Ernie Brown, W. G. Sydney McDonald, and kneeling, Graham McBride and Bryce Gibson.



Can you spot the minister? Well, they all are ministers — in a unique ministry model in the Presbytery of Temiskaming, lay ministers lead small congregations, with the guidance of a Regional Minister. Norman and Bertha Jones, lay ministers at Mackay, flank Rev. Jean MacAulay. Imagination and effort always overcome pesky issues like isolation and numbers.

The cast and crew of *The Star That Refused To Go To Bed*, which was the pageant presented during service last December at Knox, Tiverton, Ont., enjoy some fellowship and treats.



# First female moderator faces a church without walls

*Alison Elliot challenges structure with her unique tenor and tone*

by Lee McKenna duCharme

**L**ike most women doing a new thing, Dr. Alison Elliot wants to be remembered for her achievements as a human being, not as a woman. However, her gender is always mentioned in each introduction, from church chancels and AIDS hospice steps, to European political and church council lecterns, south Asian post-tsunami gatherings and Canadian academic auditoria. She is the first female moderator in the 445-year history of the Church of Scotland (and the second lay person, the last was named in the early decades of that history). She is the embodiment of the profound changes in her church. Professionally and personally she is comfortable with the change she leads, and the change she represents.

By profession, Elliot is an academic psychologist, with a PhD in children's language development. "Children are studies in change and growth. To be human is to be constantly changing and growing. If we are not experiencing change, we're probably dead. Much change in children comes incrementally. One can see it coming. Children's language and thinking and knowledge change with their experience of the world around them. However, some change seems to come out of nowhere. But yet, though unseen and unrecognised, growth and change continue, the pressures for change build and suddenly, something like a switch goes on and a whole series of changes are triggered. Likewise the church."

The 2001 Scottish general assembly was presented with a revolutionary docu-



Photo by Andrew Faiz





Photo by Andrew Faiz

**Dr. Alison Elliot's visit to PCC offices in Toronto was an impromptu occasion for a meeting of Moderators, past and present. From left, Rev. George Vais, Rev. Jim Sinclair, General Secretary of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Rick Fee, Rev. Ken McMillan, Elliot, and Rev. Glen Davis.**

ment called Church Without Walls, which left little untouched within the institution, from structure to attitude. The report envisioned change from church focus to Christ focus, from institutional church to church as movement, from a culture of guilt to a culture of grace, from running congregations to building communities, from faith as security to faith as risk.

"There is a comfort in structure," says Elliot. "But the question is, what structures? For some, Church Without Walls has been enormously threatening. The misplaced contentment in specialised language, and history-laden buildings is challenged. The vision of dismantled walls or permeable walls, that refuses ancient categories, that rolls up its sleeves to consider the needs of those outside over the needs of those inside, elicits questions of vulnerability, of security.

"Wherein lies our security? Who is our security? What was different after September 11, 2001," Elliot recalls, "was that we could see the United States as vulnerable. Whether speaking of the actual or figurative removal of church walls or a radically different approach to questions of war and peace, vulnerability is part of the human condition. In times of insecurity, she says, we tend to build walls rather than take them down. The United States curtails freedoms; Israel builds a barrier; Belfast erects a "peace-line" down Manor Street.

"A church without walls makes connections, builds communities, even in the midst of vulnerability. And it's working. Church without Walls has become a measuring stick for change in Scotland, to check the direction of change, moving into the lexicon as adjective and verb. People are saying: Is this new structure or idea church-without-walls enough? How do we 'church-without-walls' this report?"

"Church without walls is a sign of hope in a church — *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* — with permission and mandate for change," she smiles. "That's exciting. And it's not just about changing structures, how we go about being church. It's about changing the very *nature* of the church. It's not about turning structure upside down, but about dissolving the structure; what needs to change is the very idea that one person should be greater than the other."

Asked if John Knox would have considered her one of the "monstrous regiment of women" of which Mary, Queen of Scots, was chief, Elliot replies: "No doubt; he would have been apoplectic. Yet, as a reformer, he would have had to consider the challenge. However, in the end, he would never have been able to admit to changing his mind!"

She has received the Order of the British Empire for a long history of service to her church, locally, nationally and internationally. But her election as

Moderator comes as sign and portent of change already happening and more change to come. Though she is reluctant to suggest that her predecessors were in any way deficient, she is clear that a "patriarchal, hierarchical system of church is ill-disposed to reward the delicate and subtle qualities that make life a pleasure. Or in acknowledging the special spiritual gifts that the church fosters and that, characteristically, women are encouraged to nurture. Status, hierarchy, position are crude instruments when placed next to compassion or the power to heal. Yet compassion and healing are what the church is supposed to be concerned with."

Women are different, says Elliot. "We speak out of different bodies with different tenor and tone. People come to me with different expectations, they bring different things to me, expect me to be more ready to listen. Being moderator offers permission for the things of women to be brought and valued in the church. It encourages other women. The mould is broken!"

"The Moderator as an institution is studiously impersonal; General Assembly is an abstraction and de-personalised." That doesn't need to be so. If Church without Walls is about a more relational way of doing church, the role and office of moderator should not be excluded in that programme for change.

Fifty years ago, like Canada, Scottish churches were full. Now there is a

steeply declining church membership and attendance. There are many reasons for that, some are simply a feature of the society, others need to be taken seriously and grappled with. Some of that loss is not to be mourned. The Christian consensus that once existed in Scotland is gone. But its replacement is not all bad. There is a post-modern affirmation of diversity. New voices are being heard.

Elliot tells the story of a young girl “proud of her new trainers, just the right brand name”, who struggles with the competing demands of conformity and belonging and a need to be herself. Both sameness and difference are valued. So how do to build a church that welcomes, offers belonging and relationship, but does not require orthodoxy? Elliot has brought into her moderator year these concerns that had already marked her work as Associate Director of Edinburgh University’s Centre for Theology and Public Issues, as convenor of the Commission on Justice, Peace, Social and Moral Issues, convenor of the Church and Nation Committee and as member of Action of the Churches Together in Scotland and the World Council of Churches’ Commission on International Affairs.

Through visits, sermons and speeches, she brings her compassion to bear on the “scandalous inequities” that contribute to poor health, violence against women, HIV/AIDS and war. The criminal justice system and women’s prisons, in particular, have proven to be another theme of her year in office. During and following a post-tsunami visit to India and Sri Lanka, Elliot persisted in her application of the gospel to all she saw and did.

Speaking at historic and stately St. Andrew’s, Simcoe St., Toronto, Elliot said the church must not be “seduced by buildings, instead it must get out of its buildings”. She has uttered the same warning inside some of Scotland’s many beautiful places of worship. When speaking at the Scottish War Memorial and at a Remembrance Day service, she wondered aloud about “the human ingredients of inhuman warfare, the gap between people’s experience of warfare and the illusion that we know what’s going on”. She speaks of the “human pain of war and the defiant triumphalism of war”. She challenges the tendency to deny the

identities of war’s victims, to reduce “each person to the single label of friend or foe, in a concrete denial of the specific love that God has for each of us.” And she asks, “what are the things that make for peace?”

As the British people were in the throes of debate about joining the United States in war against Iraq, the Scottish parliament asked the church to adjudicate a discussion on Just War. In response, the Church prepared a letter that said, “the decision is yours,” she relates. “And, it went on the state, when that decision is made, keep the following things in mind: the need for restraint, the question of ongoing failure to bring about peace in the Middle East, the role of the United Nations in such disputes and the suffering of the Iraqi people under sanctions and the likely affects of war on the civilian population.

“The tradition of asking the church for answers is tied up in the notion of the church as establishment rather than as an adventure of faith.” The church is not adjudicator of orthodoxy, but facilitator of a process of growth and change. “On the

issue of sexual orientation,” she says, “if asked to tick a box, then I’m a liberal. But if we want to go deeper, that’s where the church can play a role. And deeper is where we need to go on a topic that is a proxy debate for a lot of other things, from the essentials of humankind and original sin to biblical interpretation.”

In an address to the Scottish Episcopal Church Synod on the tenth anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood, Elliot referred to the “ground-breaking admission of women as new life that exposed the fallacy of the idea that things could not be different, that the shape and process of the church is fixed.

“Perhaps, the really radical thing about it is that it gives the lie to the kind of world where God wraps everything up and the resurrection doesn’t happen. But we know it does and that there’s no going back now.” No going back indeed. **R**

Lee McKenna duCharme is a graduate of Knox College, and a PhD candidate at the Toronto School of Theology. She is an international trainer in conflict transformation and economic literacy, and an organizer in the health care sector.



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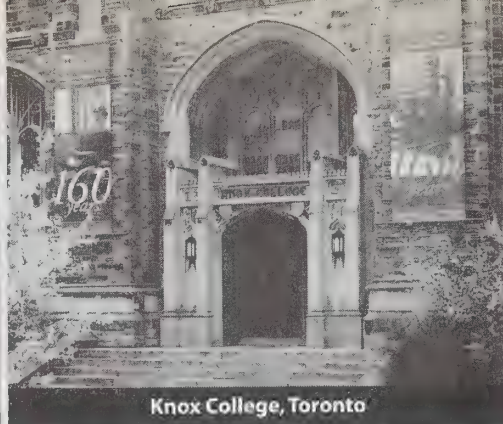
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# Adventurous souls called to serve

*The PCC's future glimpsed from ministers-in-training*

by Amy Cameron

In the common parlance ministers are called to their profession. The call comes from God. This divine interception is the only way to explain why anybody would want the job: an awkward mixture of parent, sibling, therapist, counsellor, CEO, writer, philosopher, theologian, adviser and preacher. It is a lot to ask of one person, and the financial compensation is not necessarily equal to the demands. It can be a very stressful profession.

It can also be very fulfilling. In the Presbyterian Church we are blessed with many adventurous souls who want to take on the mantle of this responsibility. They are as varied as the church itself, representing its changing nature, and its complicated demographics.

These are snapshot portraits of a handful of students from the PCC's three colleges. Each of them comes to their new life after some experience of the world, and a great deal of spiritual meditation. They represent a quick peak into the future of our church.

## Bruce Yeates

### Vancouver School of Theology, 3rd year

*Born and raised in Guelph, Ont., Bruce Yeates is an elder and life-long member of Knox, Guelph, the same church his great-grandparents, grandparents and parents attended. Yeates spent 24 years living in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where he worked as a professor of social work and later, dean of faculty of arts at the University of Papua New Guinea. Drawn to ministry at a very early age, Yeates' call was reawakened upon returning to Canada and being ordained an elder.*

"I will continue a ministry of social justice and action, a ministry that has been part of my life since childhood. I also have an interest in hospital chaplaincy, international ministry and congregational ministry that seeks a balance of worship, pastoral care and mission and outreach.

"The church can make a difference by witnessing the fact that our society is losing touch with caring for others and the environment and by bearing witness to the injustice and oppression that our consumer-oriented economic and political system causes in the global world."

## Lisa Aide

### The Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1st year

*As a young girl in Scarborough, Ont., Lisa Aide attended a number of different churches. It wasn't until her family happened upon a Presbyterian church that they finally felt welcome enough to choose a place for regular worship. With a Bachelor of Arts in religious studies from York University, Aide was drawn to ministry because of "the amazing love that God has for his children." The 24-year-old hopes to work with youth in a more contemporary congregation.*

"I have to start the battle against apathy. People no longer want to take the time to help their brother, they just choose to turn a blind eye. There are also those who are confused about what true religion is and use it to prove an argument that separates and segregates people rather than brings them together. People use religion to start wars and as justification to commit horrible, inhumane actions. The difficulty will be opening people's eyes so that they will be able to see that true religion is not about separation between people, but rather the uniting of all people.

"We are still in need of the grace of God to be able to keep on living in this world, for there is a time in everyone's life where they will be brought to their knees. There has to be something that helps them — we have to have something stronger than ourselves to be able to fall back on. We are not strong enough to exist without God's help. For without faith, there would only be hatred and greed, bigotry and anger. Without



God's presence there would be no life that was worth living, for it would be one without hope, love, faith or charity."

## Paul Kang

### Knox College, Toronto, 2nd year

*Named after his older brothers' favourite hockey player, Paul Henderson, Kang grew up in Etobicoke, Ont., where his Korean parents settled after immigrating to Canada in 1967. From the ages of 25 to 30, Kang worked in investment banking in Toronto and Chicago. He left that career to pursue an entrepreneurial business but was happily sidetracked by his love for the church. A fourth-generation Presbyterian (his great-grandfather was part of the early wave of Christian converts in Seoul, South Korea), Kang, 33, hopes to be "part of a church that looks for opportunities to integrate the many new faces of Toronto into the church community."*

"Helping to establish programs such as dinner services at Evangel Hall, fundraising for mission events and Bible studies, I discovered how fulfilling church work could be. More importantly, I realized that the satisfaction I derived from church work far outweighed the fulfillment entrepreneurship provided me because of the spiritual dimension involved. In addition, I came to discover that the skills necessary to become an entre-

"We must be a viable presence in the community, not just the building where 'those Christians' meet on Sundays. There must be a sustained effort to be actively involved in the local and surrounding communities. Those communities need to know what our strengths are so we can be a real presence to them. It only happens through real involvement. We need to be that light of hope they will turn to when they are spiritually hungry, but we need to also help them sense that hunger in themselves. We can't do that from inside a fortress of walls. We must also move toward working in a trans-generational way that brings people of all ages together so they develop the sense of church family and community. We should help them develop a sense of ownership in the church and in its services. We need to help facilitate that desire in them.

"The face of Presbyterianism is changing; it is no longer a particular ethnic or cultural face, but one that is global and represents reformed thought throughout its multi-ethnicity and multi-cultural backgrounds."

## Susan Moore

### Knox College, 3rd year

*A former elementary school teacher, office manager of a fuel distribution company and owner of a bed, bath and gift*



Bruce Yeates



Paul Kang



Susan Moore



Bart Alexander



Jeff Lackie

preneur were also highly compatible to the skills required in the church: innovation, creativity and calculated risk-taking.

"Religion provides people with the bearings to orient themselves when asking difficult questions like: 'What is the meaning of my life?' When I asked myself this question while I was disillusioned with my career in Chicago, I decided to return to church after 13 years removed from it. I believe that my exposure to church as a child instinctually guided me back as an adult, remembering it to be a 'safe' place. Thankfully, I found a faith community that was very warm and where I could ask those tough questions."

## Dennis Wright

### The Presbyterian College, 2nd year

*Wright spent close to 20 years in the cable TV industry working as a technician and, later, in middle management. Though he wasn't brought up in the church, Wright joined in 1988, when he married for the second time. From Scarborough, Ont., but now living in Montreal, Wright, 49, hopes to find a suburban or rural ministry.*

*boutique, Moore has been involved in ministry since she was a teenager. She grew up on a farm, just east of Exeter, Ont., and after her marriage, transferred her membership from the United to the Presbyterian church. She's been a ruling elder, presbytery representative elder, Sunday school teacher and superintendent, choir director and on the ministry committee of Presbytery, worship committee and board of managers.*

"The world has changed dramatically over the last few decades. We now live in a multi-cultural, multi-faith post-modern environment that brings new challenges to the role of pastoral leadership. This generation is growing up with constantly changing technology and methods of communication that bring the world and all its differences to our doorstep. We are a society driven by consumerism and a focus on individual needs and desires. So many things are available to us and we have so many choices. One of those choices is religion. The traditional religion of one's ancestors is not automatically accepted. This generation has questions for the church and wants it to be a place that is open enough to ask them.

"Many of this generation are not attending formal worship gatherings, but it does not mean that they are not searching for



a sense of spiritual direction, moral guidance and a place to find peace and stability. Therefore, I believe, mainline churches must stop hiding behind the four walls of our cherished buildings and reach out to the community and the world. That means that the church, its leaders and its members have to be willing to re-examine what it means to be a Christian in this complex context of our multi-cultural and multi-faith world so that we have a vision for the future by taking action in the present."

## Bart Alexander

### The Presbyterian College, 2nd year

*Fluent in English, French and Mandarin, Bart Alexander is a member of the Taiwanese Robert Campbell Presbyterian Church in Montreal. Originally from Nova Scotia, Alexander spent just under two years in Beijing where he met his wife, Wu Kui. Two years ago, the elders of his church asked Alexander to consider ministry — a secret dream of his — and it's been a busy two years. Concurrent to his M. Div., Alexander is also working on a M.A. in theology at La Faculté de Théologie Évangélique. In 2003/2004, he was president of the student society at the college and this year was elected to the committee on Theological Education. He is also "helping out" at Montreal West Presbyterian.*

"I'm presently organizing a renewal troupe to help out Montreal West. So far, I've put together a team of six Presbyterians who are willing to help build up the congregation. The idea is based on a model used in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. In Taiwan, however, Presbyteries have permanent troupes that move from one congregation to another, as they are needed, to get programs started and build up these churches. In Montreal the troupe will have members from more healthy churches in the presbytery committed to help

Montreal West for a fixed period of time, after which they will return to their home churches.

"Freedom of religion is the big issue facing the church in Canada today. We can see this manifested in the restrictions placed on simple acts such as the distribution of Bibles. The issue of same-sex marriage is also a problem that ministers will face in as much as they are agents of the State when they perform weddings, which are both religious and legal in nature.

"Being Presbyterian, to me, means, first of all, being a Christian. It also means being a Christian within the Reformed tradition, not isolated from church history but rooted in the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."

## Jeff Lackie

### Knox College, 3rd year

*Jeff Lackie didn't expect to enjoy his weekly visits to the big city of Toronto but that's just another happy discovery on his spiritual journey. Living in the small community of Petrolia, Ont., with his wife and two young daughters, Lackie spent fifteen years working in the parts and service department for agricultural equipment dealerships. Lackie was 28 when he first thought about a career in ministry. Now, at 41, he hopes to pursue congregational ministry in a rural or multiple nature.*

"We have to stop counting congregation numbers. When our focus is on some magic number to ensure survival, we are doomed to fail. Spend the energy on a project, community assistance or outreach of some kind. It doesn't need to be monumental — do what you can with what you have. Show others that there is activity and integrity in the church. We are told that "consumers" of religion need to see value — then we need to show them value. Not flash, not elaborate programs but real work, meaningful contribution in the name of Christ." ■

# Colleges grant honorary doctrates

Knox College will be bestowing an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree upon Rev. Rick Fee at its 161 convocation on May 11. A graduate of Knox in 1976, Fee is the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and director of Presbyterian World Service & Development. The ceremony will take place at the University of Toronto's convocation hall, where Rev. Gordon Fish will also be honoured for his 41 years of service to the Presbyterian church. Graduating Knox in 1960, Fish's focus has been on ministry in the media. He sat on the Religious Advisory Committee for CFTO television, and filmed and appeared on several religious TV series.

A special ceremony on March 7 bestowed the honorary doctorate upon Dr. Alison Elliot, Moderator of the Church of Scotland. The first female and second lay person to hold the position, Elliot was in Toronto in March where she visited church offices, spoke at Knox College and helped St. Andrew's, King Street celebrate its 175 anniversary.

The Presbyterian College, Montreal, will grant an honorary Doctor of Divinity to Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg at its 138 convocation May 12. Kouwenberg is senior minister of Calvin Church, Abbotsford, British Columbia, and convener of the Board of St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver. The ceremony will take place at the Church

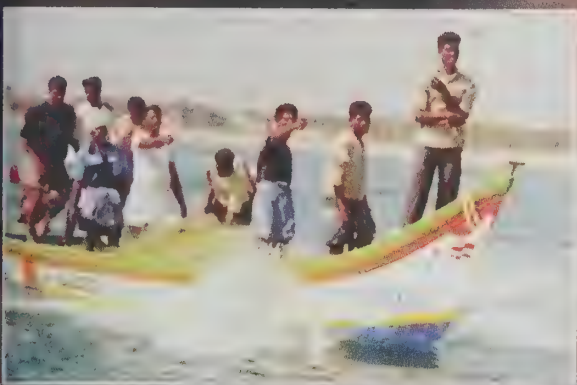
of St. Andrew and St. Paul. Knox College principal, Rev. Dr. J. Dorcas Gordon, will be the speaker.

St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology, will hold its 34 convocation on May 9 at Shaughnessy Heights United Church. This year marks the 20th anniversary of VST's native ministries degree program, and the ceremony will honour two of the people who were crucial to its formation. Honorary degrees will be given to the Ven. Ian Mackenzie, a previous director of the program and Rev. Dr. Cecil Corbett, a long-time member of the native ministries consortium. Rev. Dr. Martin Brokenleg, current director of the native ministries program, will be the guest speaker.



# PWS Developments

*a newsletter of Presbyterian World Service & Development* Spring 2005



## Life after the Tsunami

pages 24-27

Within hours of the December 26 tsunami, local partners of PWS&D were there to help. A four page special highlights some of the work being done by PWS&D partners to help communities rebuild their lives.



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# Time to Rebuild

by Karen Plater, PWS&D Communications Coordinator

**Church volunteers unload relief supplies provided by Action by Churches Together (ACT) through the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka at a Methodist church in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.**

Since the devastating tsunami of December 26, PWS&D partners have been working to help affected communities in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Congregations and individuals have donated over \$1.2 million to PWS&D's tsunami appeal — the largest response to PWS&D for an emergency event. Over \$750,000 of that is eligible for a one-to-one match from the Canadian government. PWS&D is collaborating with United, Anglican and Mennonite churches to provide nine million dollars in donations and funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to Action by Churches Together (ACT) to help rebuild shattered lives.

The impact of the disaster, with whole

communities physically and psychologically damaged, is still being revealed. PWS&D funds are helping meet immediate needs. Food, water, clothing, school kits (uniforms, shoes, books), medicine and medical supplies, bed kits, hygiene kits, kerosene lanterns, mosquito coils, nets, soap, dishes, and utensils are being supplied to those affected. Boots and gloves have also been purchased to help with the clearing of debris.

PWS&D partners have also begun work on longer term rehabilitation. Boats and nets are letting people return to fishing. Temporary shelters are allowing people to move out of schools and churches. Water projects are restoring clean water. Children are beginning to return to school. Counselling programs

are healing psychological scars.

PWS&D partners will continue to make a difference in the post-crisis rehabilitation by restoring livelihoods and rebuilding permanent housing, schools, and other community infrastructure.

PWS&D works with local partners who know their communities and can effectively and efficiently deliver relief to where it is most needed. These partners are aware of the unique challenges of each region and understand how to manoeuvre local politics, culture, religion and environment to get things done. By working through local partners, people are empowered to respond to this disaster in their own communities, often in areas difficult to access by outside agencies.



## Back to Work

On February 28 seventeen boats provided by ACT member Lutheran World Service India (LWSI) helped fishermen return to the sea on India's eastern coast. This first boat launch was the culmination of a lot of work by ACT members following the tsunami. Director of LWSI Howard Jost reports the men caught some fish and shared them with people back on shore. "It was wonderful to taste the result of everyone's sincere efforts," he says. Based on the performance of the boat manufacturers and the advice of the fishermen in these villages, orders for another 83 boats have been placed. This small step in a massive operation to rebuild after the December 26 tsunami devastated coastal villages and towns in India, offers tangible hope in the lives of people who have lost so much. KP with reports from ACT

photo: LWSI, ACT

**Fishermen return to work with new boats from ACT.**



Women from poor, marginalized communities help pack kerosene stoves to distribute to remote fishing villages.

## Sharing Experiences

With \$60,000 in immediate relief funds from PWS&D, the women's associations of long-term PWS&D partner the Institute for Development Education (IFDE) distributed rice, oil, cooking utensils, kerosene lanterns, blankets, bed sheets, mats, clothing, soap, water containers and other basic goods to 1,250 families in remote fishing villages in southern India.

Anitha Mahendiran, Executive Director of IFDE, reports that the people from the fishing villages appreciated how the women visited them and assessed the needs of the community before distributing anything. Their discussions resulted in some changes being made to the initial relief plans. The survivors asked if kerosene lamps could be provided instead of candles, as local people felt that candles would not work well in the

windy exposed areas where they were living, and posed a fire hazard in their temporary shelters. Kerosene stoves for cooking and wool blankets for cool nights were also added to the list. The villagers indicated it was the first time an aid agency had discussed their needs with them, which made them "feel treated with dignity and respect," Anitha explained.

Women from IFDE's women's associations come from very poor and marginalized communities themselves. With the support of PWS&D and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) they have been working together creating literacy classes, advocating for basic services from the government, and fostering small businesses through self-help groups and small loans. In the face of the tsunami

disaster, they saw an opportunity to look beyond the local community to neighbours in need. Now they are eager to pass on what they have learned about community development to these fishing villages, and have committed to helping in the long term. Plans are already underway to replace fishing boats, motors, and nets, start literacy classes and other development work. A \$40,000 grant from PWS&D will help them accomplish this work. KP

### Trucks deliver supplies to the fishing villages for distribution.



## Andaman and Nicobar

Long term Presbyterian partner, the Church of North India (CNI) is busy helping rebuild in the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the aftermath of December's tsunami. This group of 572 islands off the coast of India — 36 of which are inhabited — was so completely devastated that many communities have to be rebuilt from scratch. Some of these islands lost 70-90 per cent of their population

As a key agency in the area, the CNI was one of the first to respond when disaster struck. Ninety per cent of the island's population are members of the CNI. Within days the CNI was distributing emergency relief materials on the islands. They have supplied more than 10,000 people with necessities including: food, clothing, medicine, tents and tarpaulins

and basic sanitary materials such as toothpaste and brushes, soap, sanitary napkins, washing detergent and bleaching powder. In addition to meeting these immediate physical needs, CNI volunteers are running temporary schools and conducting various creative programs for children, helping them heal through drawing, dance, games and sports. The CNI is also helping people build temporary shelters with locally available materials using a design that is environmentally friendly and low in cost.

The CNI is committed to helping people rebuild in the long term. One of the priorities the government has asked them to assist with is rebuilding schools. PWS&D has provided \$100,000 to help in the rebuilding of two secondary, five middle and five primary schools on the largest island, Car Nicobar.

KP with CNI reports





photo: Mike Due...

photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT



photo: Orla Clinton, ACT



# Life after the Tsunami

Since the devastating tsunami of December 26, PWS&D partners have been working to help affected communities in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand.

**Clockwise from top left:** 1.The Rev. Tahir Wijaya, pastor of the Methodist Church in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, takes a break from cleanup duties at the church. 2.Throughout war-torn Sri Lanka, the tsunami washed loose landmines that must be cleared before rebuilding can begin. 3.Counsellors from ACT member, Church World Service, help survivors of the tsunami heal psychological scars. 4.Children playing in the mud left behind by the surges of water in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

photo: Orla Clinton, ACT



**Darfur** Living conditions in Darfur, Sudan continue to be grim. Fighting is hampering relief efforts and keeping people living on the edge of survival. In spite of the challenges, Action by Churches Together (ACT) is delivering food, shelter, water and medical care to people in need. PWS&D has sent over \$66,000 in recent months to help ACT provide relief in Darfur.

**Guyana** Torrential rains in January 2005 caused serious flooding in Guyana. Flooding affected many church buildings and offices of The Guyana Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery of Guyana, and the Congregational Union of Guyana. Carlos Cardenas Martinez from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PCUSA) visited the region to help PWS&D assess how we can help people get back on their feet. They have identified food, housing, clothing, medical assistance, latrines and sanitation and rebuilding community infrastructure as essential needs. PWS&D has sent \$5,000 as an initial contribution to help the most affected families.



Displaced families in Um seifa, Ta'asha area, South Darfur.





photo: Daniel Fekete, ACT

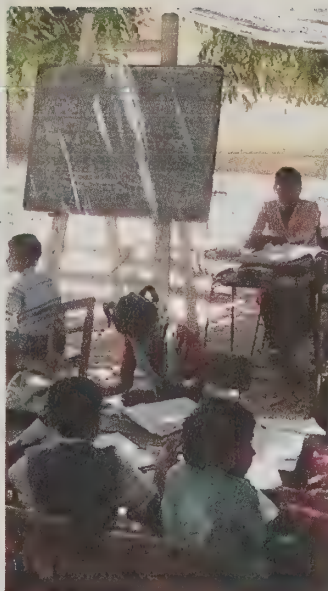


photo: Daniel Fekete, ACT



photo: Gesine Wolfinger, ACT

**Clockwise from top left:** 1. Many school children affected by the tsunami are without school buildings and are taking their classes among the trees and under canvases. PWS&D has provided \$100,000 to the Church of North India to rebuild schools in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands off the south coast of India. 2. Transitional shelters are being built for 900 families in Tayagatha Pura Modra, Sri Lanka, 30 km south of Colombo. They are for families who lived on the coast and whose houses were completely destroyed. 3. The water purification unit in Meulaboh, Indonesia managed by two ACT members, Church World Service and Norwegian Church Aid.



Pumpkins grown for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank

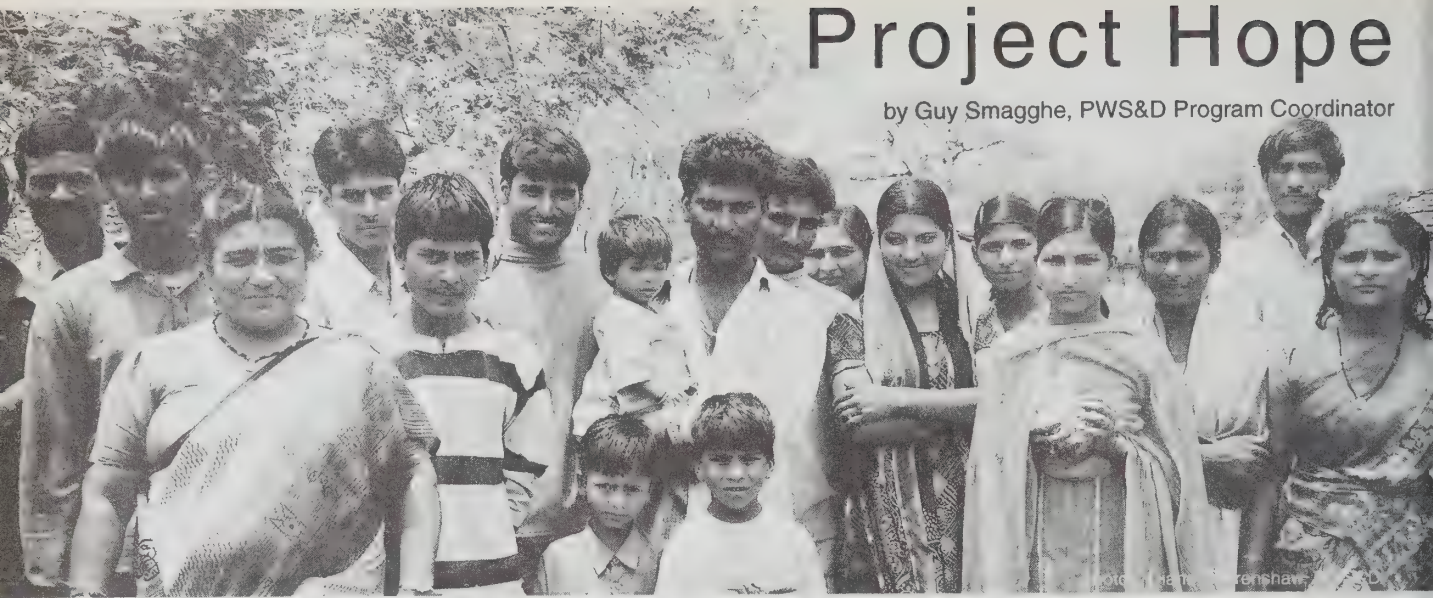
**Pumpkins** Kentville-New Minas, NS churches grew an unusual crop to raise funds for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, pumpkins. The local Council of Churches provided \$1,000 to get the ball rolling. Local volunteers gave time and energy to planting, hoeing, harvesting, storing, transporting and selling the pumpkins. The Superstores of New Minas, Windsor and Kingston and local churches pitched in to sell pumpkins and receive donations. New Minas Rotary Club sold \$2,100 in pumpkins and contributed a matching cheque for \$2,500. In addition to pumpkin sales, offerings from two ecumenical services helped bring the total amount raised to \$14,000.

**SLIDE AID** Top classical and jazz trombone players are joining forces to raise funds for PWS&D. SLIDE AID, a benefit concert at 8 pm on April 11th at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, will feature Al Kay, Gord Wolfe and Scott MacInnes. Alain Trudel is conducting and works will range from Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, to Eric Clapton's *Layla*, to all trombone "big band" charts, and movements from Mussourky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.



# Project Hope

by Guy Smagge, PWS&D Program Coordinator



Villagers from a Banchhara community tackling HIV and AIDS.

How does a church undertake HIV/AIDS work in a community where prostitution is ritually sanctioned and considered a way of life based on caste? This is the challenge that the Church of North India's *Project Nirmal* faces in its efforts to respond to HIV/AIDS in communities along the national highway in Madhya Pradesh, Central India.

Fifty-four villages are stretched along the highway between Ratlam and Neemuch, an area not far from Jobat where The Presbyterian Church in Canada has a long history of work. These villages are members of the Banchhara tribe. Here prostitution is an accepted way of life; integrated into religious lore and history. Banchhara girls are divided into two groups: those who marry, and those who become prostitutes. It is obligatory for mothers to dedicate at least one daughter to prostitution, early in childhood. Banchhara men — usually fathers and brothers of the girls — flag down trucks to bring in customers.

Promoting HIV/AIDS prevention in these villages is very challenging. Karuna Roy, coordinator of HIV/AIDS programs for the Church of North India's Synodical Board of Health Services, explains that village leaders don't want to change their way of life. But if anyone can change their minds, it is Karuna Roy.

Karuna Roy is valiant in her crusade to stop the spread of HIV in the Banchhara villages. At the same time she is compassionate and caring to those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Karuna discovered that the key to breaking into these communities was convincing village leaders and members that she and the Project Nirmal staff are genuinely concerned for the health and well-being of their daughters, sisters, cousins, and aunts.

Project Nirmal combats HIV/AIDS at many levels. Staff work with volunteers from the community to talk to people about the dangers of HIV and how they can protect themselves. Many of the Banchhara people are illiterate and have never heard of AIDS. Numerous sessions have been held to discuss HIV/AIDS prevention, and condoms are now freely available in many of the villages.

People are encouraged to be tested at government testing centres within the project area, where pre- and post-testing counselling are also offered. For people who test positive, Project Nirmal staff work to treat opportunistic infections, train families in home-based care, and provide palliative care when required.

With a view to the longer term, Project Nirmal is providing Banchhara youth

with alternatives to prostitution. With much effort, one girl has chosen to leave prostitution. She is now married to a Banchhara man, but has paid a price — banishment from her home village. Still she continues to work with Project Nirmal in other villages, and is dedicated to educating Banchhara people on the risks of HIV/AIDS, and encouraging other girls to leave prostitution.



Karuna Roy stands against HIV/AIDS.

Combating tradition and history is a huge task with much work still to do. In some villages, community leaders are very co-operative but in others women are not allowed to interact with the project team at all. "Nirmal" means hope in the local language, and the Church of North India is committed to ensuring, in an age of HIV/AIDS, that there is hope in Banchhara villages.

*Project Nirmal is supported with funds raised in the **Towards a World without AIDS** campaign.*





# A simple test. A big impact.

by Bella Lam, PWS&D Program Coordinator

Jane Mwenitete preforms a test for HIV at a voluntary counselling and testing clinic in Baula, Malawi.

The rain is coming down hard and our driver squints to see out the windshield. The car slides around on the muddy unpaved road. A broken bridge, a few harrowing twists and turns, and we finally arrive in Baula, a remote village in northern Malawi. I am here to visit a mobile voluntary counselling and testing clinic operated by the Ekwendeni Hospital AIDS Program.

Counselling with voluntary testing are important parts of any strategy to reduce the transmission of HIV and AIDS. When properly counselled, people that test positive are more likely to seek treatment for HIV and related infections, and protect others by reducing any high risk behaviour. Testing for pregnant women and new mothers is encouraged in particular for the protection of their own health and the safety of their newborns. For people who test negative, counselling is an opportunity for them to learn how to protect themselves against future infection.

Usually people in Baula have limited access to any kind of health information or care. When they need medical attention, villagers will spend the day walking to the Ekwendeni hospital 25 km away. But the hospital has committed to bring health care to outlying

communities through mobile clinics like the one I am visiting.

The mobile clinic opens in Baula once a week, providing HIV/AIDS counselling and anonymous testing. The set up of the clinic is basic; a small bare room furnished with a couple of chairs borrowed from a nearby school, and a bench to hold the medical supplies. While the equipment is rudimentary, the standard of care is high to ensure that the testing is accurate and the counselling is effective. Counsellors attend an intensive 5-week course to ensure they are trained to run the clinics.

Jane Mwenitete, a counsellor, explains that before a test she learns about her client's background and explains what HIV/AIDS is, how the test works, and what the results will mean. She uses this time to clear up any misconceptions about the disease.

The procedure used in Baula is a simple blood test which provides results within 20 minutes. If the result is negative, Jane talks more about prevention methods and advises the client to come back in three months for a second test, to ensure they are not within the period where they are infected and the virus is undetectable. If the test is positive Jane helps the client cope with the result and

provides information about services available for HIV-positive people. Jane will also share vital information on nutrition and proper treatment for opportunistic infections. She can also identify people who might qualify for medical treatments such as life extending antiretroviral drugs, recently available in Malawi.

The whole process takes about an hour, depending on the amount of support the client needs. For many it is the first time they have received accurate information about HIV/AIDS

Ekwendeni Hospital also provides counselling and voluntary testing at their mobile prenatal clinics to help prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Mothers who test positive will receive antiretrovirals until the birth of their babies, and newborns will receive antiretrovirals immediately after birth — proven ways to reduce the spread of HIV.

*Funds raised through the **Towards a World Without AIDS** campaign have helped Ekwendeni hospital start a new mobile clinic in Enyezini, another remote area, and are helping expand the prevention of mother-to-child transmission program.*





## Music, meat pies, fashion shows and cookbooks raise funds for AIDS

Presbyterian congregations and individuals have raised over \$250,000 for the *Towards a World without AIDS* campaign since it was launched at General Assembly in June 2004. In addition to raising funds they have brought awareness to their communities.

In Baddeck, Reverends Lloyd and Shirley Murdock raised over \$1,100 with a Christmas house tour. Visitors donated \$5 to tour seven rooms decorated with the many unique Christmas ornaments, nativity sets and decorations they have collected over the years.

Music has played an important role in fundraising efforts. Armour Heights, Toronto, is selling a CD recorded by their choir for the campaign. Kerrisdale, Vancouver, hosted a concert with internationally recognized pianist Jane Coop and congregation member Andrew Dawes, a violinist and founder of the Orford String Quartet. These Juno award winning musicians performed the music of Beethoven. Posters put up in area churches, schools and storefronts helped garner a lot of community support, including the loan of a concert piano for the evening. With 300 tickets sold, they raised over \$8,000 for the campaign. Minister Glenn Inglis reported, "The success of the evening is making us dream of other possibilities of educating the community in support of the development work of our church."

The Presbytery of Ottawa launched its fundraising and awareness efforts with a candlelit concert titled *Songs of Love: Hearts of Compassion* on the Saturday before Valentine's Day. Renowned mezzo-soprano Julie Nesrallah, accompanied by pianist Chris Devlin, performed music from *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Samson and Dalila*, among others before a full house at St. Andrew's in Ottawa. The concert raised over \$8,600.

On the other end of the musical spectrum the youth groups from Knox, Waterloo and St. Andrew's, Kitchener worked together to stage a city-wide concert geared to youth. Five local rock/punk/ska bands, including Asher, Ska-papas, Something Useless, and Analog Wry, donated their time to play for 200 youth. Mike Burns, elder at

Knox, Waterloo, was extremely pleased with the event. He explained, "the event

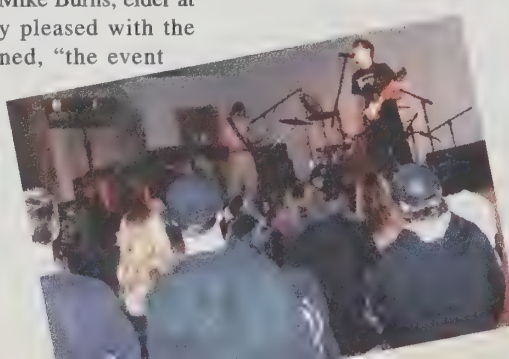
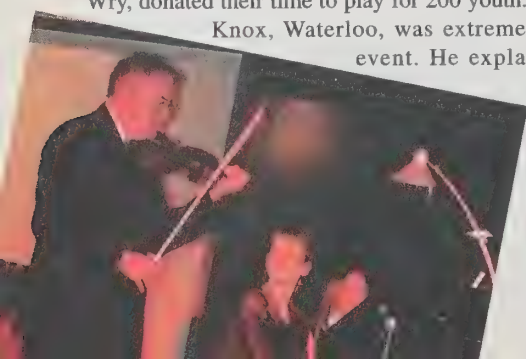
goes far beyond the money raised. The empowerment of the two youth groups, raising money from a non-traditional group, the outreach to the community, the peer education about AIDS between the music sets, and bringing youth into a church that they might never otherwise step a foot in are all incredibly valuable."

St. George's, London, is collaborating with the AIDS Committee of London on a ten month education and fundraising initiative. Four fundraising meals, a special appeal in October and coin boxes to be distributed during Advent will help raise funds. Seventy-five per cent of the proceeds will go to PWS&D and twenty-five per cent will be directed to the AIDS Committee of London.

Other London churches have also been busy. New St. James has been running an entire Lenten series with special speakers on HIV/AIDS including a professor from the University of Western Ontario providing information on the latest developments in AIDS research. Westmount has been selling meat pies to raise funds. The Westmount Mall allowed them to use their community service booth for one week to promote the campaign and take orders for the frozen pies.

Knox, Waterloo, set an ambitious goal of raising \$25,000 over three years to support the campaign and raised \$13,000 in just three months. Fundraising events included a fashion show, a cookbook created and sold by the church, and a Christmas craft and bake sale.

Knox, Wanham, dedicated their fall community dinner to the AIDS campaign. Usually the funds help with the regular expenses for this small congregation. In the fall however they were within budget, and decided to support the AIDS campaign. An ad in the local weekly newspaper drew in 95 people who raised \$1,420 that evening. Minister Shirley Cochrane reports, "My most exciting moment came when a woman, who does not attend church, came up to me and quite excitedly said, 'Wow! I didn't know the Presbyterian Church did stuff like this!'"





# The talk show service



*by Alex MacLeod*

**“God hates religion”** trumpets the website of The Meeting House, one of Canada’s fastest growing churches. But don’t apply the label “church” too freely: this particular gathering of Christians based in a converted movie theatre in Oakville, Ont., styles itself as “a church for people who aren’t into church”.

A typical service at The Meeting House begins with contemporary musical worship, including a rearrangement of at least one historic hymn. The sermon is preceded by a series of quotations on the big screen set to an energetic soundtrack and culminating in a film clip. A lively question and answer period then wraps up the preaching segment, which often goes for close to an hour.



Heikki Walden, a real estate agent in his 30s, was active in an Anglican church in downtown Toronto until recently, but has since joined the Meeting House.

"They have a great sense of humour and there's an openness toward questioning that you don't get in a lot of churches. Maybe because people are afraid of hard questions or because they prefer not to ask them. But at The Meeting House they expect you to get out of your seat; they invite you to talk back and raise objections. The extended question and answer time after every sermon shows how much this church values dialogue."

Walden clearly enjoys the teaching, but he suggests that the success of The Meeting House lies in its healthy lack of dependence on staff and its effectiveness at encouraging newcomers to immediately take on leadership roles.

Each week 44 small groups, known as "Home Churches", with an average of 11

people each meet to encourage continued reflection on the scripture studied the previous Sunday. The discussion on these occasions is designed to dovetail with the preaching and the home church leaders aim to help people integrate

**'Church is simply not on their radar screen. In Canada we are now on our, in some cases, fourth generation of secular Canadians'**

Carey Nieuwhof

spirituality into the grind of their week-day lives. According to Tim Day, senior pastor of The Meeting House, this is where church really happens. It's also where newcomers begin to take ownership of The Meeting House.

Lisa Lum leads a home church. In her late 20s, she works in financial services

in Toronto. She joined The Meeting House after attending a Presbyterian church for the last three years.

"The Meeting House is designed to get new people excited about being there. One of the best things about it is that you can easily take friends or family who aren't familiar with church — and you don't have to worry about them being bored or freaked out," she explains. "The services are fun as well as worshipful and their use of multi-media is superb. There's always a film clip and plenty of other pop culture content. It's both thought-provoking and easy for people to relate to."

The new pantheon of our culture is filled with Hollywood's deities and demi-gods, says Day. The Meeting House makes it a priority to engage with film and television, among other media, partly in order to connect with the more than one half of its people who

## The post-modern, post-Christian church

### Same message, new packaging

One Sunday morning at Trinity Community Church outside of Barrie, Ont., lead pastor, Carey Nieuwhof, started his sermon by talking about *Satisfaction* by the Rolling Stones. The song had been played earlier in the service. He discussed the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll ethos of the song, the search for worldly happiness, the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, and the emptiness of that search. He used the song to talk about real satisfaction, that deep down spiritual pleasure that only God can offer.

On another Sunday his congregation listened to *Under Pressure* by Queen. It's that kind of a congregation; one that understands pop-culture better than it does Christian tradition and theology. Patrick Voo, associate pastor, refers to Trinity's congregation as the post-modern, post-Christian seekers. The church is geared to those people who have a spiritual urge, but no personal history of religious training.

Voo tells of a young woman, a student at a local college, who was volunteering at the church. A comment was made, in passing, about David and Goliath. He says she had no idea who he was talking about. In a 2003 *Record* article Nieuwhof wrote, "Church is simply not on their radar screen. In Canada, we are now on our second, third or, in some cases, fourth generation of secular Canadians." But, like the Stones song, secularism provides no satisfaction.

The Trinity service targets this large body of seekers, using the language and the stuff of non-Christian culture, within a Christian context. Nieuwhof wrote, "By using

contemporary Christian songs, secular music that raises theological issues, prayer, drama, video clips and biblical preaching designed for people with no biblical knowledge, we're trying to create a service that anyone can access." Voo gives an example he learned from a visiting guest pastor: in biblical times people might have carried water in skins, sought it from wells or rivers. In our times, we carry water in plastic bottles or get it from a tap. "The water," Voo says, "is the same. Only the packaging has changed." And, so it is with the Christian message, the story of Jesus and God's grace.

The Trinity service seems radical in ways that shouldn't seem radical. The dress code — that of the choir, the preacher and the congregation — is casual. The tone of the service is conversational more than churchy. The images on the screen, the songs in the sanctuary, are often more secular than Christian. But, this is radicalism only in the context of traditionalism.

Trinity also offers a Wednesday night service. While Sunday morning is for, as Voo optimistically and confidently calls, the "pre-believer", with a heavy emphasis on teaching, the Wednesday night service is for the "believer", with an emphasis on confession, meditation and faith development. Jim Czegledi, Associate Secretary of Worship and Evangelism for the Presbyterian church, believes the Wednesday night service is the great untold story of Trinity Community. "This is where church members come to worship, and for Christian nurture to support their outreach ministries."

AF

have either become Christians in the last two years or who have not yet taken that step.

Day describes Sunday worship as “a combination of church service, university class and late night talk show” and explains that the intention is to attract people who have negative stereotypes of church. To the traditional core of a worship service, The Meeting House tries to add thoughtful teaching and discussion that wrestles with key issues as well as the kind of informal and even irreverent tone that you might expect from David Letterman and Jay Leno.

Founded in 1986, as a church-plant of the Brethren in Christ, The Meeting House has been expanding by 35 per cent a year since the arrival of Bruxy Cavey, currently the church’s teaching pastor, in 1996. The latest tally puts its membership at 2,500.

The Meeting House has multiplied geographically as well. Three worship services happen every Sunday morning at its Oakville site, but the teaching — whether Cavey or someone else — also gets beamed to rented Silver City theatres in Hamilton, Brampton, and Yorkdale in North Toronto for 10 a.m. gatherings. A new branch is planned for downtown



Photo by Andrew Faiz

Toronto in the Paramount Theatres on John St., starting later this year.

Cavey may be in the spotlight, but staff understand their separate roles. Day came on board in 2001 to focus on administration. He and Cavey split the job that most ministers do. He organizes the church behind the scenes while Cavey teaches up front. Day identifies this division of labour as one of the keys to the success of The Meeting House.

“We want to present the message a certain way,” explains Day. “That’s less likely to happen when preaching preparation has to compete with a ton of other duties. Bruxy spends 30 to 40 hours a week on his sermon. He reads and researches widely. This kind of focus has allowed him to develop into an amazing communicator.”

But The Meeting House will not let its success get in the way of its calling. The leadership makes regular attempts to discourage church growth voyeurism, asking those who remain spectators to find another movie theatre. Instead, they stress a deeper commitment and a wider ecumenical horizon. Staff and others also actively counter the hero worship of Cavey or a narrow fixation on the particular appeal of The Meeting House.

This approach disobeys every rule of marketing, but it pleases newcomer, Heikki Walden.

“When they talk about how they’re a church for people who aren’t into church, it’s more than an advertising gimmick,” says Walden. “Somehow this place has managed to move away from institutional loyalty and a preoccupation with turf and all the other garbage that causes problems and get back to a focus on Jesus Christ. That’s the real story.” **R**

Alex MacLeod is a regular contributor to the *Record*. He is the University and Young Adult Ministries worker at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto.

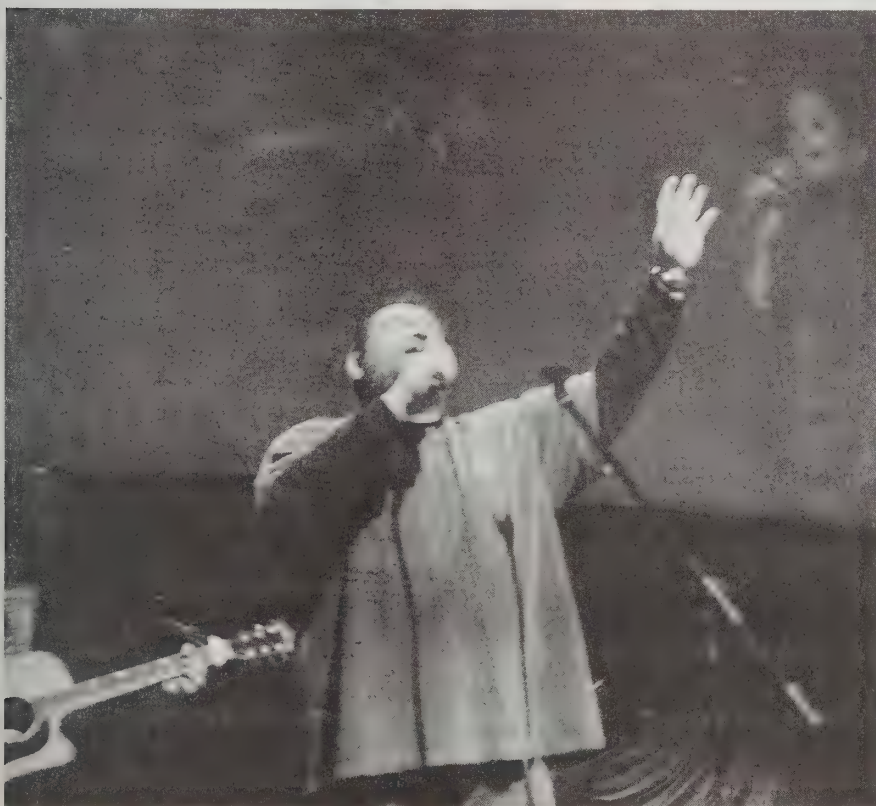


Photo by Andrew Faiz



# An ordinary star

## A challenged woman sees no challenges

by L. June Stevenson

Sheila Conkey, daughter of Frank, a retired Presbyterian minister, and the late Agnes, a diaconal minister, was born in 1957 and knows more about the Presbyterian Church in Canada — through ministers, members and adherents — than the average Presbyterian. Sheila has lived in congregations in Cape Breton, Scarborough, Pickering Village and Ajax, Ont., where her father was minister. With her parents she has also visited many congregations around the country, with dad as special speaker, visiting friends and making new ones. Her numerous adopted aunts and uncles are mostly church people, part of Sheila's vast extended family, crossing not only Canada but into the United States and over to Britain.

Sheila is a seasoned traveler, visiting Ireland on seven occasions and getting to know her Irish relatives on Frank's side, as well as to Agnes' family in Kenora, Ont. She has been to the Summer Institute at Princeton Theological College twice, even being enrolled. She met the president Dr. Jack Cooper when her parents took summer courses at Princeton for study leave. Retired now, Cooper admits to using some of Sheila's thoughts when taking services at a retirement centre. At Princeton she took turns attending lectures with one parent or another. After a lecture by noted Canadian Anglican writer-theologian Herbert O'Driscoll Sheila told him that he should speak more slowly so that her Dad would "get it better". She met figure skater Kurt Browning at the opening of a sports' store in Pickering, Ont., and now considers him her pen pal. She has followed his career and they



Sheila and June drop one, pick up two.

correspond intermittently. She prizes a teddy bear he once sent her. Never a shy one she wrote to Queen Elizabeth 11 expressing her sympathy on the death of the Queen Mother and received a reply from the Queen's lady-in-waiting.

Sheila's ability is more amazing because after she was born, her parents were told that she would live only three or four years, that she would never go to school and might not walk. They were advised to consider an institution immediately. Little Sheila Maureen went home, weighing four pounds, 13 ounces.

Described by her father as "an uninhibited follower of Christ and herald of the gospel all her life," Sheila's faith is exuberant. She shares it unselfconsciously with people she meets, inviting a new friend with a problem with, "Let's pray about it right now." After the death of a young friend's grandfather, Sheila had a

prayer in her room and together they sang *Jesus Loves Me*.

Sheila's faith is at times deeply profound despite the fact that she is developmentally challenged. Proudly Frank recalls the time when Sheila was admitted into communion in 1971 at the age of 14. When Agnes and Sheila brought snacks to the class on their last evening, Sheila joined their discussion. She told them that if they were ready to become full communicant members of the church, "You have to open your hearts to receive Jesus." Astounded, the class agreed and Sheila then became a communicant member.

Despite the challenges Sheila faces, she doesn't see herself as handicapped and the Conkeys have raised her as they would any child, to be articulate, self sufficient and productive. It is a twenty-four hour, seven-day a week routine that is accepted cheerfully. Helping others is

something Sheila does naturally whether it is writing a few words of encouragement or donating to a cause. Sheila collects pennies, rolls them and takes them to the bank. When she has thirty dollars Sheila writes a cheque to either of several charities, including the Hospital for Sick Children, the Alzheimer Society, and the AIDS Committee of Durham. Once she prayed, "Lord Jesus, I'll make this short and sweet. I feel so badly about people with leprosy. They need your love and your healing power." Again she said, "People die of AIDS, you know. It is one of my jobs to help them." After donating to Sick Kids she wanted a tour to see where her money was going.

Sheila swam for Heart and Stroke and bowled for the Canadian Bible Society. She has an adopted sister, Ndari, in Indonesia through World Vision. Proudly she displays her photo on her picture wall. (There Sheila is pictured with Kurt Browning and the late actor John Ritter, among others.) Sheila knits pneumonia vests for babies and young children overseas, a project of the Life and Mission Agency of the PCC.

Sheila supports some animal charities, having a special affinity for whales and dolphins. On her wall is a picture of the whale from the movie 'Free Willy.' She dreams of becoming a marine biologist so that she can save the lives of these mammals and be a spokesperson against their heartless killing.

Sheila also dreams of being a writer — "like John Boy Walton." Sheila has kept a journal most of her life, filling book after book with the events of her days, her thoughts and her prayers. Since we began this article she calls me her "editor" and together she and I are working on a book that will bring the rich wealth in this material together.

Although both Frank and Agnes modestly take little credit for Sheila's

accomplishments, their love and attention has obviously been a large factor in helping Sheila reach her full potential. Agnes recalled how she learned to talk by repeating nursery rhymes with them. "We knew she related them to life one day when she was three years old. I couldn't understand what she wanted when she kept backing into me," Agnes said. "In exasperation Sheila pointed to her 'falling down' leotards and said, "London bridges..."

Sheila is "very proud of my parents for raising me to be a Christian lady. My parents raised me right. I have faith in God, and I trust God. I love God, and he loves me. He will never hurt me."

Sheila has definite opinions about boyfriends. "Who needs them if you trust God? God is the man for me. God is all I need. I had a boyfriend once. Now I'm married to Christ."

Sheila and I first met in the early 80s when Agnes was active in the WMS. Then after I moved to Ajax in 2000 Frank asked me to pour tea at a party to celebrate the 50 anniversary of Agnes becoming a deaconess. One of the special speakers recognizing Agnes' contribution through the years was Sheila. She spoke humbly yet confidently, praising her mother and father, and thanking God for giving her such good parents. Asked once how she managed to take part so calmly in public events, Sheila quipped, "Just think positive, pretend the people have all gone home."

On her birthday Sheila once exclaimed, "A star is born!"

"Are you bragging, Sheila?" she was asked.

"No," she replied, "I'm just an ordinary star." ■

L. June Stevenson is the former editor of *Glad Tidings*, a publication of the Women's Missionary Society.

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# On hold or hold on?

*Ministry without a minister is a matter of attitude*

by Patricia Van Gelder

**M**inistry during a vacancy. Education for ministry during a vacancy. It seemed like a simple enough article when I agreed to write this, but the more I got into this, the bigger it got. Huge. Still, at the risk of oversimplifying, and looking at this from an educational perspective, there is only one major difference between a congregation with a minister and one that is without one. Attitude.

There is an attitude in our denomination about congregations that are “destitute of a fixed pastor” (Book of Forms, Appendix A-8). It’s not openly talked about but it’s there, like the hidden ingredient in the soup, seldom seen but always making its presence known.

I’m not speaking here of the many practically permanent vacancies in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, where neither congregation nor presbytery has any thought of ever calling or appointing a minister. These congregations already know about doing what they do without having a “fixed pastor”.

This is about those shorter-term vacancies. In between the last pastor (recently gone) and the next one (arriving in the next year ... or two). The goodbyes have been said. The moving van has gone. The pulpit has been preached vacant. And the attitude is alive and well.

Like here: the interim-moderator was meeting with the Session. The meeting had gone well and now all that was needed was to set the date for the next one, as well as some possible agenda items. One of the elders spoke, “Last year we started talking about term service for session members but then the pastor moved and everything stopped. I think we should keep working on that.” The interim-moderator hemmed and hawed and finally

said she thought that issue should be left until their new minister was in place. And then she called for adjournment.

Or here: different interim moderator. Different session. After opening worship, the interim moderator looked around the table and asked, “What do we call a congregation that doesn’t have a minister?” He was answered with blank looks. One of the members started to flip through the index in his Book of Forms. Others shifted in their chairs, avoiding eye contact. And then he said, “We call it ‘church’. A

## **We know that ministers come and ministers go and the life of the congregation goes on**

congregation that doesn’t have a fixed pastor is still a church. I just think it’s a good thing for us to keep in mind.”

Neither is exactly a true story but they could be. In fact, they are both based on true events. It’s all about attitude. We sometimes act as if congregations without ministers are in suspended animation, alive but without much happening. In semi-hibernation until spring arrives with the next service of induction.

And we know better. We know that the church is the community of faith (with or without benefit of clergy). We know that “all Christians are called to participate in the ministry of Christ.” (Living Faith 7.2.1) We know that ministers come and ministers go and the life of the congregation goes on, even in that interim between the last moving van pulling away from the curb and the next one pulling up.

Of course, the language we use doesn’t help. We call congregations with-

out ministers vacant. Have you ever looked up some of the synonyms for vacant? Unoccupied. Disused. Deserted. Empty. “So, what’s happening at your church these days?” “Oh, not too much. We’re unoccupied, you know.” Is it any wonder many congregations looking for a minister choose to have a “search committee” instead of a “vacancy committee?” But still the attitude persists.

So, what can we do about it? We know that attitudes are hard to change — and slow. But here are a few ideas that might help. This isn’t an exhaustive list but perhaps it will start you thinking and get you making a list of your own —

**Ministers:** Are you considering a move? Have you started looking with interest at the ministry opportunities listed in the *Record*? Before you walk too far down that road, think about the congregation you now serve. You know how this pastoral charge does things. So imagine what it will be like when you leave. Which programs and events will continue uninterrupted? Which will be put on hold until a new minister is in place? Will the session lead the way concerning the worship cycle in this church, making sure the interim moderator knows how things are done here? How will pastoral care needs be met?

Are there things that you would want to be different for your congregation? Now is the time to do something about it — while you are still their pastor. If you can speak openly with the session about the possibility of a call to another church, then together you can plan for the ministry of this church during that interim time.

**Session Members:** That imagination exercise is a good one for you, too. And you may have the advantage of remem-

bering what your church life was like the last time you were vacant. Identify the areas of greatest weakness. Remember what happened then and what you wouldn't want to happen again. Now do something about it.

You don't have to wait for your minister to have accepted a call to another church. Trust your pastor. Trust yourselves. Talk about it at a session meeting. Make it the topic of a session retreat. Sign up for an online course with the Elder's Institute (there are several that would be helpful, including When the Pulpit is Vacant: Ministry in the Interim). Ask presbytery's help in organizing an area-wide workshop.

Interim moderators: Remember that if there are any experts around on ministry in this congregation during this vacancy, you aren't one of them. Pay attention. Ask questions. Find out what's important to the people of this church. Ask if there are areas in which they need extra support. And remember to encourage them.

Presbyteries & Synods: Consider having a workshop around the whole issue. Help interim moderators (and future interim moderators) fine tune their skills. Make sure everyone understands church procedures, not just the letter of the law but the spirit. Give ruling and teaching elders a chance to plan at a less anxious and stress-filled time.

Ministry during a vacancy. It really is about attitude. That time between pastors can sometimes feel like everything has been put on hold. But it doesn't have to. It can be a great time of self-discovery in the congregation. Of enjoying the strengths of the family of faith and working on the areas of weakness. Of growing together as the Body of Christ.

What it takes is a memory — ministers come and ministers go but the life and work of this congregation goes on. And it takes a decision — we will plan and learn and work together in order to grow stronger as people of God. And it takes a change of attitude. **[E]**

Rev. Patricia Van Gelder is minister at St. Andrew's, Cobden and St. Andrew's, Ross, Ont.

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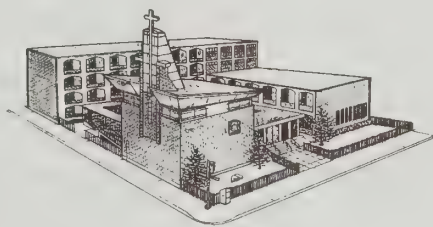
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# Not so big, not so freaky

A rad Bible for hip teens

by Andrew Faiz

The Bible can be stuffy — at least in the way it has traditionally been taught. Church can be stuffy; at least in the way it is presented. I understand this. Many possible congregants are lost, usually in the teen years, because of the tone and style of the traditional service. Others are lost, often within the teen years, because of the way the Bible is presented. When I was a teenager, too many years and follicles ago, a group of bright folks devised the Good News Bible. The language was modernized and it had funky little graphics. It was an attempt to get me to the Bible.

Of course, this has a long history. Whether the Vulgate, the King James', or the NRV, each and every translation of the Bible, in each and every language, has had the same goal. Never did a publisher or translator think, gee, I'd like to make this as obscure as possible for people to read. Each version of the Bible is a democratic manifesto, a reaching out to each and every human being on the planet, whether they speak Croatian or Klingon.

So, it is with this democratization in mind that I picked up *Revolve and Refuel*, two very modern New Testaments aimed at, in order, teenaged girls and teenaged boys. Despite my open mindedness I found them a bit too rad for my taste. I set them aside for a while, and picked them up again. The publishers of this Bible did their market research and found teens don't read the Bible because "it is too big and too freaky". But, they do read magazines.

*Revolve — The Complete New Testament* looks like a teenage girl magazine. There are three prosperous, smiling, healthy young women on the cover, sharing space with blaring headlines, typical of fashion mags: "Are You Dating

Godly Guy?" and, "Beauty Secrets You've Never Heard Before".

Of the latter, let me give you a couple of examples. This Bible is filled with sidebars — little boxes mixed in with scripture — that are meant to liven the text. Beauty Secrets is a regular feature. "Chug that water down and you'll notice a remarkable difference in the way that you feel. But don't wait until you're feeling thirsty. That means you're already dehydrated. Keep this in mind when you're feeling a little low on God. Jesus is our living water: we'll never get thirsty after tasting him." A photograph of a glowing young woman illuminates this advice. (They're everywhere in this version. In the boys' version there are peachy chinned toothy young men. This is a very American publication.)

Another Beauty Secret? "Looking for ways to stay in shape? How about incorporating a compassionate heart into your workout? Do a car wash for charity. Paint a house of someone less fortunate than yourself."

That's a lot of good intention. Both of these secrets are found within the text for Romans. So, as Paul advises, "You think you are a guide for the blind and a light for those who are in darkness," there is a beauty tip about helping others. Some may find the pictures a little too sexy, but that's their problem. This is healthy, suburban, hip, and active representation of youth; much like a J. Crew or Tommy Hilfiger catalogue.

Pop culture and Christianity make awkward partners and something has to give. Perhaps it's my well socialized Presbyterian stuffiness, but even I, an aficionado of pop culture, have difficulty thinking of Eminem and Gwen Stefani



as people of influence, as they are called in a sidebar in this glossy Bible. On a list of Top Ten Random Things to Pray For, family comes first, underprivileged people are fourth, celebrities are seventh and your future spouse and future children are ninth and tenth.

The last two items give a hint to this Bible's evangelical roots. Evangelicals are generally more relaxed with traditions. (They tend to be more theologically conservative but ritually liberal than mainline churches.) They are more intent to get the message out than to worry about the form of its presentation. But the conservatism seeps through — the girls' Bible-mag is about makeup and relationships and shopping; the boys' version is about "girls, cash and cars". There is embedded, via the magazine style sidebars, within the truly subversive words of the gospels a very safe and clichéd expression of gender roles.

But, there's my mainline stuffiness again. It's not as if my church and I are freely embracing the Bible's message. I have the mainliner's gene for eschewing the new and the fanciful. I really must overcome that, because, if nothing else, *Revolve and Refuel* are very good looking Bibles. And that's something, at least. **R**

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway Community Church in Toronto. You can contact him at [afaiz@presbyterian.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterian.ca).

# Unique location brings hope for growth

*Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough*

by Amy MacLachlan

**C**lose enough to Toronto to commute to work, yet far enough away to enjoy a slower pace and nature's bounties, the Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough faces some unique challenges and interesting possibilities. Older individuals flock to the tranquil towns and rolling hills, looking for relaxation in retirement. Small, rural towns add country charm, while the presbytery's northern bounds dip into cottage country — bringing a wealth of city escapees to its shores in the summer months.

Contrary to many presbyteries where aging congregations often mean little hope for the future, the influx of older individuals is exciting. "Some smaller communities might develop into larger retirement communities, which are a possibility for congregations that have been dwindling to have an opportunity for growth," said Rev. Reg McMillan, clerk of presbytery and minister at St. Stephen's, Peterborough.

The diversity of the presbytery comes from the merging of the two separate areas in late 1970. It currently consists of 21 charges — two of which have three points, and eight with two-points. Only four charges sit vacant. The challenges to multi-point charges call for creative thinking. Part-time staff, stated supply and lay ministers are all being used to fill the gaps. The three-point charge of Canington, Cresswell and Wick are currently under the eye of Rev. Dawn Griffiths, but a new approach is in the works.

In January, the three congregations decided to create an "open door" cluster ministry. Supported in part by Canada Ministries, a ministry team will handle the charge's long list of duties. The "open door" aspect reflects the congregations'



**For 16 years, St. Paul's, Peterborough, has presented Bethlehem Live. The real-life nativity story features a reproduced Bethlehem street complete with private dwellings, an inn, a stable, borrowed sheep and a church-owned donkey named Giselle. The 25-minute production uses music and pantomime, and attracts large crowds every year.**

attitude towards their communities. The presbytery's other three-point charge, Bolsover, Kirkfield and Woodville, have already been practising a less-formal version of this, rotating two ministers through the three congregations for Sunday morning services. The congregations are making it work, but McMillan, who has been in the presbytery for 15 years, said the situation is "still a struggle."

Despite seeing his fair number of small churches close, McMillan can see the hopeful aspects of a grim situation. "Those congregations hated to close, but they wanted to be part of something more than maintaining a building. They wanted to be a part of something that carried out the mission of Christ."

One of the more exciting endeavours is the presbytery's recent focus on youth.

Several congregations have active youth groups, while others have few youth at all. Making this commitment a presbytery-wide initiative helps get the ball rolling. In the winter of 2004, the presbytery conducted a youth survey "just to see what's going on and how programs can be supported," said McMillan. "We also wanted to see what the possibility was of having presbytery-wide events." Plans are still in the discussion process. The highest number of youth is at St. Andrew's, Cobourg, with 45. They have a special program called SPRED that supports the spiritual and social needs of the developmentally handicapped.

Although it's currently catering to the young, the presbytery has its share of old buildings and historic moments. St. Paul's, Port Hope, established in 1827,



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celebrated 177 years last June. Congregants still worship in the building's second version (erected in 1905), which features a chime donated to the church in 1912 "to be used for the delight and inspiration of the citizens of Port Hope". During extensive renovations to the building in 1998, a time capsule was found in the cornerstone, including a 1905 copy of the *Presbyterian Record*.

The church also features a memorial plaque dedicated to Rev. Lt. Col. John Weir Foote, a minister at the church from 1936 - 1940. Enlisting as a military chaplain at the outbreak of WWII, Foote was awarded the Victoria Cross for transferring wounded soldiers to ships waiting beside the beaches of Dieppe.

Likewise, St. Paul's, Peterborough, (established in 1833 when services were held in an old stable), honours William Ferguson, a Royal Canadian Air Force pilot who died in Normandy at age 22. His mission was to bomb a German munitions train, but he never completed the task. A stained glass window memorializes his bravery.

Centreville Church, South Monaghan, held its first services in a log school-house as early as 1833, when the town consisted of a blacksmith shop, hotel, general store, post office, community hall, church, Sunday school, and cemetery. The present church sits on the same site, with the Sunday school and cemetery also remaining. Perhaps the stability of the church has something to do with its foundations. Known as the "church built upon a rock", the building has no basement, but boasts a huge rock under the choir loft.

The presbytery's diversity continues to be a blessing and a challenge. "We're focusing on youth, but there are all kinds of age groups who are in need of ministry just as much as the younger ones," said McMillan. "We're just trying to meet those needs." ■

**Correction:** The *Record's* Jan. 2005 edition stated in its profile of the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew, that Rev. Andrew Melville was a successor of John Knox. Although not intending to indicate a direct link, the comment caused some confusion in that Knox lived during the 1500s and Melville 300 years later. We apologize for the error.

# Dignity in death comes with confidence in God

*Death comes to all, it is out of our control*

**E**arlier this year the sordid culture of death found another hero. Marcel Tremblay killed himself in Ottawa, after announcing that he wished to “die with dignity”. One of the many tragedies of this event was that dignity was the very last thing with which the 78-year-old man died.

He became a minor player in a circus. No glorious death on a metaphorical battlefield here, but a lonely and sad dribbling away with a plastic bag around his head. That the media were made aware of all of this at every stage only goes to prove just how exploitative and lacking in grace it all was.

There is something achingly macabre about the whole process. He went out for dinner with his friends and family before the event, where they made jokes and told tales. A few journalists wrote stories about him, talk-radio warriors gave their opinions, lawyers prepared briefs. Not dignity but despair.

The basic contradiction, the obvious inconsistency, is that the man was able to enjoy good food and good humour right up until his death. He gave interviews, was cogent and clear, could walk and talk, consider alternatives and arguments. This in itself indicates a quality of life that he and his people denied existed.

Please don't tell me about pain and suffering. My father died of cancer of the spine, after surviving a serious stroke and having lived for thirty years with psoriasis and arthritis. But then my dad was brave and not afraid of life's challenges. Not afraid of death's sting either and would have told the right to die mob to take a hike.

My mother has severe dementia. The words she utters no longer make any

sense, she can seldom feed herself and she tends to wander. This intensely intelligent and startlingly kind woman has been deprived of so much of what made her who she was.

Yet the essential, the core, is still there. She is still the same person and the same soul. Yes, the soul. Created and given by God. To sacrifice my mother as a martyr on the black altar of euthanasia would be an obscenity beyond compare. That splendid and sagacious writer

**'The man who kills a man, kills a man. The man who kills himself, kills all men; as far as he is concerned he wipes out the world.'**

*G. K. Chesterton*

G. K. Chesterton once said, “The man who kills a man, kills a man. The man who kills himself, kills all men; as far as he is concerned he wipes out the world.” Quite so.

The poor wretch in Ottawa was a victim of societal pressures and expectations; even if he wasn't aware of it. I will not comment on his family but I will say that if either of my parents reached the point where they wanted life to end I would feel that I had been a personal failure.

I would ask why had I not found the right medical, spiritual and emotional support for them? Why had I not convinced them that life was good and that the sight of playing grandchildren, a new dawn, an old friend was worth the fight?

Virtually all pain can be controlled and experts in the field of dying and

terminal illness agree that it is depression and the fear of a painful death that invariably cause the most distress.

Indeed it is what seems to be the case in this latest engineered drama. Anxiety about an inevitable passing that could be unpleasant and, important this, out of one's control. But that is what defines death. It is out of our control. Here, surely, is the essence of the argument.

The modern age screams against loss of authority. We must always be in con-

trol of the situation. Resist ageing, resist decline, and resist anything that doesn't appeal to us for any reason at any time. Death is the only taboo left. How appropriate it is, then, that the great egalitarian blade comes for us all.

We can shout and moan and complain but in the end we can do nothing. We slide and slip into the beyond. If we are confident that this life is merely the land of shadows, that real life hasn't begun yet, then death is of only passing fear.

But if we have no such confidence, we have to die pretending that we are still in charge. A shame. Because a genuinely dignified death has nothing to do with plastic bags and reporters. **R**

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Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# I used to have answers... now I have kids!

Sixteen years ago I had three theories about raising children. Now I have three children and no theories. I used to know what parents should do with kids who had runny noses. Or short fuses. Or full diapers. I knew what parents should teach their children about life, liberty, and the pursuit of stuff. I knew what time to send them to bed.

And then I had kids of my own. Three of them. In three short years. I soon discovered that parenting is the biggest investment we will ever make, yet children come with no instruction manuals, no "mute" buttons, and no guarantees. And if we happen to have all the answers with our first few kids, chances are that God will send along a little surprise package who will go to Bible camp one day and send us a letter that goes something like this:

Dear Mom and Dad,

Our camp counsellor told us to write our parents in case you heard about the flood and got worried. Don't worry, we're fine. I got out of the cabin just before it floated away and I still have my toothbrush. Nobody got drowned because most of the kids were out in the woods looking for Isaac. Luckily black bears aren't as fierce as grizzlies, so Isaac is okay. Please call his mom and tell her. He can't write because of the cast. We never would have found him in the dark if it hadn't been for the lightning.

I threw up this morning. Our speaker, Mr. Gibbs, said it was probably just the leftover potato salad. He says he used to get sick like that on the food in prison. I'm so glad he got out and came to teach us about the Bible. Well, I better go. We're going to town to mail these letters and buy bullets. Don't worry about a thing.  
Love, Jeffrey

When I was a boy my mother said, "Son, if you don't have the answer, ask the experts." I was only two at the time, so I didn't understand her. But I do now. Here are four parenting tips from the experts.

**1. Be courageous and consistent.**

"Parenting is not about winning a popularity contest," says author Kathy Peel. "When we say no to negative things we need to fill the vacuum with positive alternatives. And remember, model the behaviour you want your children to embrace."

**2. Don't always be right.** Steven Curtis Chapman believes that the five hardest words a man will ever say are, "I'm sorry. I was wrong." He believes the words are essential to a healthy home atmosphere.

**3. Teach your kids to sacrifice.** For 18 years, Floyd McClung and his family lived in the Red Light District of Amsterdam, surrounded by pimps and prostitutes and pushers. Their mission was to tell these people the

liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ. "We believed," Floyd says, "that there were more pitfalls and dangers bringing up children in the apparent safety and serenity of suburbia, with one eye on the mortgage and the other on the VCR. Our kids need to see that we put obedience above comfort and righteousness above safety."

**4. Live on your knees.** When Franklin Graham was out partying, his mother was indoors praying. "It really bugged me," Franklin told me. "I would come in late and there she would be, sitting in her rocker with a book or a Bible on her lap. I knew she had been praying for me. She never lectured or made threats. She kept the communication lines open and encouraged me. And she let me know I was loved and welcome at home." In 1974, Franklin knelt in a Jerusalem hotel room "sick and tired of being sick and tired." His mother's prayers had been answered.

The most profound parenting advice I will ever give this is: Live on your knees. And the next time you see a GAP T-shirt, remember what it stands for: God Answers Prayer!

Now, I think I'll go rescue my son from summer camp. ☐

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Phil Callaway is the author of a dozen books including *Making Life Rich Without Any Money* (Harvest House). Visit him online at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)



for the journey

# Aspen

*Easter is about the formation of a resurrection community*

By David Webber

**Y**ou might say I am rather fond of the Aspen tree (*Populus tremuloides*). I like its slippery smooth silvery bark. I like its small heart shaped leaf, delicate, suspended on a flat petiole that lets every individual leaf tremble at the insinuation of a spring breeze. I like its soft creamy wood that yields to a sharp pocketknife like Edam cheese. I like its blazing yellow color that transforms the failing light of Autumn, its fragile black lace silhouette on the white hills of winter, its downy catkin fluff coating the spring roads like dance wax snow and its mist of Aspen syrup that sugar coats my truck on warm summer nights. I like everything about the Aspen tree. But most of all I like the way the Aspen grows.

In the rolling parkland of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Plateau, the Aspen never grows alone. It always lives with other Aspens, in community, in small groves. An Aspen grove is a delightful place to be. In fact we live in one, or rather a small one lives just outside of our bedroom window. Linda and I have been studying this Aspen grove in detail for the past 16 years. Every morning it is our habit to open our curtains and consume at least one cup of steaming dark coffee in silent reverie, staring at the Aspens that fill the window. In spring we marvel at the little Philadelphia Vireo — a tiny bird just yellowy-green enough that with its incessant flitting to and fro is able to completely disappear amidst the tender trembling foliage of the Aspen. In summer, perhaps attracted by the night's sweet Aspen mist, the Swallow-tailed

contemporary spirituality

## rebirth



Butterfly flits in and out of the foliage, some of which is now showing the gray trails of an almost microscopic insect, the Poplar Leaf Miner that earns its living excavating chlorophyll from the top surface of Aspen foliage. In autumn we watch the leaves slowly turn from green to golden yellow, sometimes almost orange, and we marvel at the way all kinds of wildlife seem to be attracted by the Aspen's warming glow. In winter we are often treated to the sight of a Ruffed Grouse bending the Aspen's branches to the point of snapping as it deftly nips off the hard grain-like nutri-

tious buds to stoke its internal furnace against the harsh Cariboo winter. Truly an Aspen grove is a delightful place to be, a community that attracts.

There is something that amazes me about the Aspen that I never knew until recently. Although it was long suspected, with the advances of forest genetics foresters now know who is related to whom in an Aspen grove. And the neat thing is, in an Aspen grove almost everybody is related. It turns out that Aspens regenerate themselves more asexually, that is by shooting up from the roots below, rather than sexually from the



formation of seeds above. This means that in an Aspen grove very often all the trees are tied into the same complex system of roots, and therefore share the same genetic material, the same life source, the same nutrition.

Today is Easter Sunday. It is my habit to spend some of this day reflecting alone. Today I happened by a place along a road that once had a nice grove of Aspens. It had been viciously slashed by a right of way clearing crew just a couple of years ago. Some bureaucrat several hundred miles away in the provincial capital must have deemed that it was now a policy to strip all vegetation from along roadsides. The slashing crew had cut down every last living Aspen stem and ground them into mulch in an attempt to fulfill some government bureaucrat's right of way maintenance contract to the last letter. I stopped and gazed at where the harmless Aspen grove had once graced the side of the road just two years before. What I saw made me smile. I had seen it many times before, in land clearing that had been left for a couple of years to rest before working the earth with disc and plow. The area was carpeted by a new grove of small healthy Aspens about a foot and a half tall. They were just bursting their buds with tiny new spring leaves, each individual tree coming up from the common root system below that had not been touched by the vicious slashing project. I smiled quietly, and in that infant grove of Aspens demonstrating a rebirth, a resurrection to new life from the common rootstock that nurtured a previous generation, the power of Easter was once again born into my own life, but this time with a difference.

The difference was for me, that this morning Easter became a community reality, a grove thing. Like most people who are a product of western culture and its doctrine of individualism, I have never had problems appropriating the power of the Easter resurrection as an individual thing; Christ was born for me, Christ died for me, Christ rose for me, Christ reigns for me. But this morning it was as though the Aspen grove was saying to me, "It's not all about you, David. Easter is first and foremost about the formation of a resurrection community, a grove of

Christians with its roots from a common stock, the risen Christ, the first born from the dead, the first born of many, many brothers and sisters. (Romans 8: 29)

As I climbed back in the 4X4 pickup and left the Aspen grove I thought about the risen Christ. I thought about His resurrection appearances in the Bible and how all of them were to two or more people or for the direct benefit of two or more people. I thought about Jesus' words that looked forward to His resurrected presence with his followers in community: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matthew 18: 20) And the more I thought this Easter morning, the more

### **'There is no life that is not in community. And no community not lived in praise of God.'**

*T.S. Eliot*

that it was impressed upon me that the resurrection is all about the continued presence of the risen Christ in the formation of a community that seeks its life and unity from the common source, the risen Christ. We really are a grove of Christians rooted in the presence of the risen Christ. Like T.S. Eliot said: "There is no life that is not in community. And no community not lived in praise of God."

I have been a pastor now for nearly 22 years. The very first thing that I did when I was placed in my first rural church was to begin a small study and prayer group. Shortly we had five small study and prayer groups going in that little country church and the little church grew to the point of bursting its seams. To be honest I didn't have a clue what I was doing nor what was happening. I just knew that in my own experience I had felt Christ most powerfully present in small groups and so I expected most people who tried them would too. Apparently so. I even went as far as saying that each person's first church commitment was to their small group, and so if one had to miss something, miss church on Sunday morning not the small group. Colleagues in ministry thought I was nuts but people

seldom missed Sunday morning church anyway. I was never one to put much stock in what colleagues thought about me nor much reflection into why things happen. This morning Aspen grove experience has changed the latter.

My Easter aspen grove experience has moved me to reflection and to share. Here is the product of that reflection. Wherever and whenever two or more meet in faith, potentially Christian community can freely exist, for it is a process of faith and gathering around the promised presence of the risen Christ, like on the road to Emmaus where the two disciples had their eyes open to the presence of the risen Christ. (Luke 24: 31) I believe that in the early church, the process of Christian community happened primarily in small groups, in small groves of Christians, not huge forests, to continue the Aspen metaphor. I believe that today it will continue to happen best in small groups. I believe that it is very hard for an intentional community of faith with the qualities of community described in Acts 2: 42 to develop outside of small groups. I believe that without small groups, congregations quickly become collectivities rather than faith communities. I believe Karl Jung was right when he analyzed large congregations so, and insisted that collectivities resulted in the lowering of consciousness of the individuals within it. The lowering of consciousness incapacitates community formation. And I believe that by continuing to focus on large forests of Christians instead of small groves, congregations instead of small groups, we actually feed people's desire to be anonymous and individualistic and are thus at cross purposes to the risen Christ who seeks to build intentional communities of faith rooted in him. I believe that until we learn this we will shrivel and starve to death as church rather than experience rebirth and new life. And I believe that another trip to the Aspen grove might just get me roasted as heretic within my own denomination, but hey, who cares! ☒

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Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen, And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

# Debating dogmas — two views

## Fight the Right

As a minister I receive unsolicited mailings of theological tripe from various factions of the Christian Right all the time. The issue is not about the faith integrity of individuals, but the distorted dogma driving American policy. This fundamentalist movement has exerted unprecedented influence over the Bush administration during its first term and there is every reason to be alarmed over their continued influence in the U.S., Canada and indeed the world.

Our biggest concern should be over the way they distort Scripture, turning the liberating Word of God into a weapon of abuse against all those who oppose their views. The leaders of this Christian fundamentalism consistently declare the virtue of human tolerance a sin. They are on the record in favour of capital punishment for children. They have campaigned to oppose the UN Declaration of the Rights of the child, and have systematically lobbied State politicians to erode anti-discrimination laws aimed at protecting gays and lesbians. They continue to promote the thoroughly discredited notions that homosexuality is “a lifestyle choice”, that homosexuals can be converted to heterosexual orientation, and that parents can prevent their children from becoming gay or lesbian, by following the dubious ideas of James Dobson of Focus on the Family. They have forced public schools to teach Creationism and have replaced good, protective sexual health teaching with an abstinence only doctrine that has failed miserably to curb teen pregnancy, HIV, or other STD rates.

If this were not enough, they have endorsed George W. Bush as being “divinely chosen” by God as their leader, with the consequent “divine” approval of his policies, both domestic and foreign. This view is especially dangerous as the Christian Right cloaks the war in Iraq in

holy terms, campaigns against the United Nations because they view it as “the Anti-Christ” and aligns itself with Zionist movements meant to endorse Israeli domination in the Middle East, all of this interpreted as the will of God, revealed in Scripture.

It is high time that those of us within the Reformed tradition in Canada speak out and take action against such perversions of Scripture and Christian theology. There are sound theological reasons for a proper separation of Church and State, and they need to be heard now more than ever. As Christians we are to speak a liberating prophetic word to governments on behalf of the most vulnerable people in our nation and world, but we are to refrain from coercion and domination. As Canadians we have a serious stake in opposing the current hegemony the Christian Right now exerts within the U.S. and world.

The ecumenical Christian faith and social justice community known as Sojourners based in Washington, D.C., has put together a prophetic statement and petition in opposition to the views and tactics of the Christian Right campaign to dominate U.S. domestic and foreign policy. This statement has been compared to the Barmen Declaration drafted by those Church leaders dissenting to the dogmas of Nazism. The Sojourner’s Statement and other resources can be obtained on line at [www.sajo.net](http://www.sajo.net). Another excellent resource is the book: “With God On Their Side: How Christian Fundamentalists Trampled Science, Policy, and Democracy in George W. Bush’s White House” by Esther Kaplan, New Press, 2004. I sincerely hope and pray that as Presbyterians we will take this issue seriously, with religious fundamentalism wreaking havoc the world over, we must act. **R**

Linda Moffatt  
Mosa, Ont.

## Fight special interests

Dear Editor,

I am truly fed up with this same-sex marriage issue, but it wasn’t Christian groups that put it on the public agenda. It was gay activists working through the courts and government of Prime Minister Chrétien. His successor, Paul Martin, has consciously decided to keep it there. The Supreme Court ruled that Parliament was not obligated to change the definition of marriage but could if it chose to. Let’s remember that a Liberal government supported a resolution in 1999 to uphold the traditional definition of marriage. What has changed in the intervening years? Perhaps the only change is more aggressive and effective lobbying by special interest groups representing a tiny segment of Canadian society (less than three per cent according to recent research by Reginald Bibby; around two per cent according to Statistics Canada), combined with a few judges seemingly in love with the notion of reinventing our society after some theoretical utopian model.

Christians are called to speak up for what we believe to be right and to act, not to sit idly by while ill considered, unnecessary and politically motivated social engineering is forced upon Canadians. Focus on the Family and some courageous Roman Catholic clerics deserve our support and thanks for publicly upholding traditional marriage. Let’s hope politicians who claim to be Christian will do the same when it comes to a vote.

P. Wolstenholme

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of the *Presbyterian Record* but of the author’s.



# Restless expert sees church growth

*Suggestions are helpful, if the data is accurate*

by Stuart Macdonald

**R**eginald Bibby is the number one expert on religion in Canada. *Restless Churches* combines Bibby's reflections on data in the 2001 census with arguments from his recent book *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (2001) and a modification of some suggestions for ministry presented in his 1995 book, *There's Got to be More! Connecting Churches and Canadians*.

The story, according to Reginald Bibby, is very simple. Canadians have deep religious roots. They do not change their religious identification easily and retain an interest in religious activity they deem worthwhile. The demand is there. The problem is supply. The "research findings are decisive", Bibby states. "The demand for ministries that emphasize spiritual, personal and relational issues is there. The problem is that, in too many instances, the *supplier* has not come through." (p. 50, italics in original) Throughout *Restless Churches* Bibby castigates academics and church leaders for not giving committed laity an accurate view of what is happening in Canadian society in terms of religion.

The latter half of the book offers solutions to this problem. Bibby's suggestions, first expressed in *There's Got to be More!*, can be summarized in his phrase "think affiliate". Affiliates are those who still identify with a particular religious denomination even if they do not attend services or are not members. Bibby believes churches can grow by locating and activating these affiliates.

Despite some good ideas, the usefulness of this book ultimately rests on whether or not it accurately depicts the

Canadians religious scene. Is the analysis of the Canadian census of 2001 accurate? Does the data presented clearly demonstrate an ongoing and widespread interest in religion in Canada? Unfortunately, the evidence of any current or potential religious revival is remarkably weak.

Bibby makes much of the continuing interest in religion in Canada among those not currently involved. One of the foundations of this argument is the responses, summarized in a table and discussed in the text, to a rather soft question: "Would you *consider* the *possibility* of being more involved in a religious group *if you found* it to be *worthwhile* for yourself or your family." (p. 47, emphasis added) Bibby notes in *Restless Churches* that more than half, or 55 per cent, of Canadians who were not attending frequently responded in the affirmative. A careful reading of his previous book, *Restless Gods* however reveals that this is a summary of the data — only 15 per cent answered "yes", while the other 40 per cent answered "perhaps" (*Restless Gods*.) This is a very weak foundation for the kind of definitive argument for religious interest which is so central to both books.

Arguing for this continued religious interest, Reginald Bibby is quick to dismiss the recent 2001 census finding that 16 per cent of Canadians reported "no religion". Bibby argues throughout *Restless Churches* as he has elsewhere that this is only a temporary category and that in his research these "nothings" become "something" (p. 30-31). This too is a key point in Bibby's argument and one that is

## Restless CHURCHES

How Canada's Churches Can Contribute  
to the Emerging Religious Renaissance



REGINALD W. BIBBY

Author of RESTLESS GODS

difficult to dispute as it largely comes from his own research. Yet the reality is that the "no religion" category has grown dramatically over the last four censuses. In 1971 those noting no religion numbered 929,575 (four per cent), in 1981 1.8 million (seven per cent), in 1991 3.4 million (12 per cent) and in the 2001 census 4.9 million (16 per cent). If this is a temporary category, why has it kept growing so dramatically? The explanation that it is all related to life stages and that people will become "something" no longer seems satisfactory. Indeed, if it was included in his list of major religious groups in *Restless Churches* (Table 2.7) the "religious nones" would rank as the second largest denomination in Canada. This growth seems more significant than any perceived religious renaissance.

*Restless Churches* offers some helpful suggestions on how to minister in Canada if there is, as the subtitle suggests, an "Emerging Religious Renaissance" in Canada. Unfortunately, Reginald Bibby has not provided enough evidence to prove there is such a renaissance. The ministry suggestions thus need to be used with caution. **R**

Stuart Macdonald is the Director of Basic Degree Studies at Knox College.

**Aubertin, Vonda**, 2004. Member of Knox, Welland, Ont. Vonda created floral arrangements (fresh and dried) that spoke beautifully of her love for God and nature.

**Beattie, Rev. Robert Hartley**, Minister of Knox Presbyterian Church, St. Catharines, Ont. 1952-1954 and later long time member and elder of Central Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont., passed away in Calgary, Alta., on January 28, 2005 in his 93rd year.

**Courtenay, Ronald**, began the early hours of his next great adventure — going home to his Lord and Saviour on Saturday, January 15, 2005. As a young man, The Reverend A. Ronald Courtenay traveled from his homeland (Belfast, Northern Ireland). After meeting and marrying Wilma Smart (Richards), he returned to high school as a young father, furthered his education in theology school and was ordained by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In Guelph, Ont., he ministered at Westminster-St. Paul's Church from 1970 to 1975. Later in life, a career change directed him towards what he felt was his true calling, teaching. After retirement, Ron taught himself German and through his travels made numerous friends and touched the lives of many people. He is survived by his wife Priscilla, his children Rhonda, Moira, Ronald

and Orma, seven grandchildren and two brothers. The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.

**Donnelly, Mary (May)**, long time member and faithful worker for Presbyterian Women of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, Ont., died on December 19, 2004 in her 84th year.

**Ofield, Bill**, long time member and elder of Knox, Dundas, Ont., died on Wednesday, January 26, 2005. A kind, gentle man.

**Smith, Karl**, long time member, elder, treasurer and board member of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Riverview, N.B., passed away December 27, 2004 in his 64th year.

**Tobin, Frank (Roy)**, long time member of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, Ont., died December 2, 2004 in his 62nd year.

**Wetherup-Kitchen, Laura**, 2004. Laura was a charter member (1948) of Knox, Welland, Ont., and was involved with the Board in those early years. Fondly remembered by all.

**Wiseman, Marjorie**, age 88, Rosetown, Sask. Died October 5, 2004. Her life was a loving witness to the Lord she served. A faithful

servant of the Church as an elder, Church School teacher, C.O.C and Explorer leader, Church treasurer, choir member, W.M.S. member and Camp Christopher counsellor.

**Young, Frederick Norman**, passed away on February 8, 2005 in his 89th year. Rev. Young graduated from The University of Western Ontario in 1943 and Knox College in 1946. He served The Presbyterian Church in Canada for the next 50 years serving in Charges of Marshfield, P.E.I., Kirkland Lake, Knox-Limehouse Georgetown, Ont., and 17 years at Duff's Puslinch-Knox Crieff, Ont. Norman is survived by his wife Margaret, father of Rev. Donald Young of Brantford, Beth of Milton and Eileen of Toronto, five grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Norm will be remembered as a faithful and loving pastor.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST. **Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: pcrecord@presbyterian.ca**

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North Bay, Calvin; Rev. Wallace Little, PO Box 983, Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0; 705-384-5453; awlittle@sympatico.ca. (effective July 31, 2005)

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# called to wonder

Written by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.

## Believe in God, also believe in Jesus

Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:5-6, NRSV)

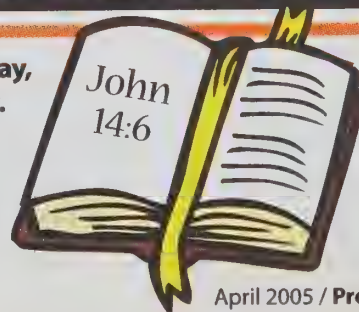
Colour in the letters found in this stained-glass window. To help you out, the letters have dots in them. When you have discovered the three words, write them into the Bible passage above.



**Dear Jesus, by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way, the path of prayer yourself has trod: Lord, teach us how to pray.**

(adapted from *Prayer is the soul's sincere desire*, #660, in the *Book of Praise*)

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# The marvel of suffering

*Despite all, this remains God's world*

**A**cross Canada flags were at half mast. Newspaper headings asked, "Why"? When four young Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers were slain on a farm near Mayerthorpe, Alta., Canadians wanted the answer to that question. All citizens of Canada surely felt some degree of the pain and suffering that this event brought to the immediate families of these officers and to their colleagues in the peace and armed forces that serve our nation.

Sooner or later we will know the reasons. At least we will learn about the series of actions behind this bizarre event. Another question may be asked by some. What is the meaning to this suffering? Is there a purpose as to why human beings go through times of trial, death and loss? In humankind's search for meaning, the meaning of suffering has most intrigued us. With our reason and rational thought, we humans often demand that the days of our lives have meaning, and that all events, even suffering, have a defined meaning. The French poet Charles Peguy stated, "Suffering and death are the only unavoidable obstacles which compel the most mediocre man to call himself into question, to detach himself from his existence, and to ask himself what would permit him to transcend it."

Pope John Paul II remains steadfast in his teaching ministry. Beyond the "soldiering on", or the flippant, "grin and bear it", he is teaching a lesson from his own life. He is challenging our society's mania for youth, vitality, perfection and appearance. Dr Manfred Lutz of the Vatican stated, "Precisely in the handicap, in the disease, one can...perceive the truth of life in a clearer way. The Pope's message is that suffering is part of life and has meaning."

Beyond the "meaning of suffering", I believe Christians are called to consider the "marvel of suffering". Children will

break legs and arms and they will suffer. Disease still strike in the prime of life. Dear ones will die and leave others behind. Acts of violence will inflict untold suffering on victims. It was Anne Morrow Lindberg, a woman who knew suffering in her life who stated, "I do not believe that sheer suffering teaches. If suffering alone taught, all the world would be wise, since everyone suffers. To suffering must be added mourning, understanding, patience, love, openness, and the willingness to remain vulnerable."

Rev. Dan Schiemann, father of Peter, one of the slain officers, demonstrated the marvel of suffering in his eulogy at the memorial service for his son and colleagues.

He said, "...The pain of our loss is beyond anything we could have ever imagined. Over and over people tell us that they could never begin to understand the depth of our loss. That is true. But we know of One who does understand and feel our pain because He lost His son, too. It happened when God gave the sinless life of His son at the cross to redeem sinful lives and to purchase forgiveness for us all. Three days later, He raised His son from the dead and conquered death. It is through this event where human history was intersected by divine grace and mercy that we have hope. This hope, that's what's sustaining us. It's not an idle wish, but a certainty based on the promise of God. And this hope fills us with eager anticipation and a longing for the time when we shall be forever with the Lord. It is this hope that will ease the pain of our loss, as the Prince of Peace comes to our hearts and says to be still and know that I am God. Peter told me a year ago, "Dad, if something ever happens to me, I want people to hear about Jesus and to hear about Hope." Constable Peter Schiemann, my son, I carried out your wish this

afaterrnoon...Peter, we will see you in heaven, but we can hardly wait."

Eric Gans quoted in *Violence Unveiled* stated, "Christianity's impact on the West is a tribute to the power of its basic conception, which is the absolute centrality of the position of the victim. The moral significance of this position is enormous." The cross remains at the centre of human history. Jesus Christ was crucified. He died. And in one marvelous act, God raised him from the dead. As Presbyterians we acknowledge the empty cross, emphasizing the resurrected Christ. With full acknowledgement of the meaning of the suffering and the pain of all humanity, we point to the marvel that the suffering has been overcome by the new life that has been made possible.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is marvelous for, beyond the suffering, beyond the horror there was evidence and proof of new life, of hope beyond the suffering. We believe that we are raised with Christ and we live our lives with that marvel of resurrection after events that challenge us to our core. The marvel of suffering is in seeing that in spite of this event, this remains God's world.

## Moderator's itinerary

### April 1

Committee to advise the moderator

### April 3 – 5

Assembly Council

### April 5

Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington

### April 14 – 24

India

### April 29

Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan  
100 anniversary event





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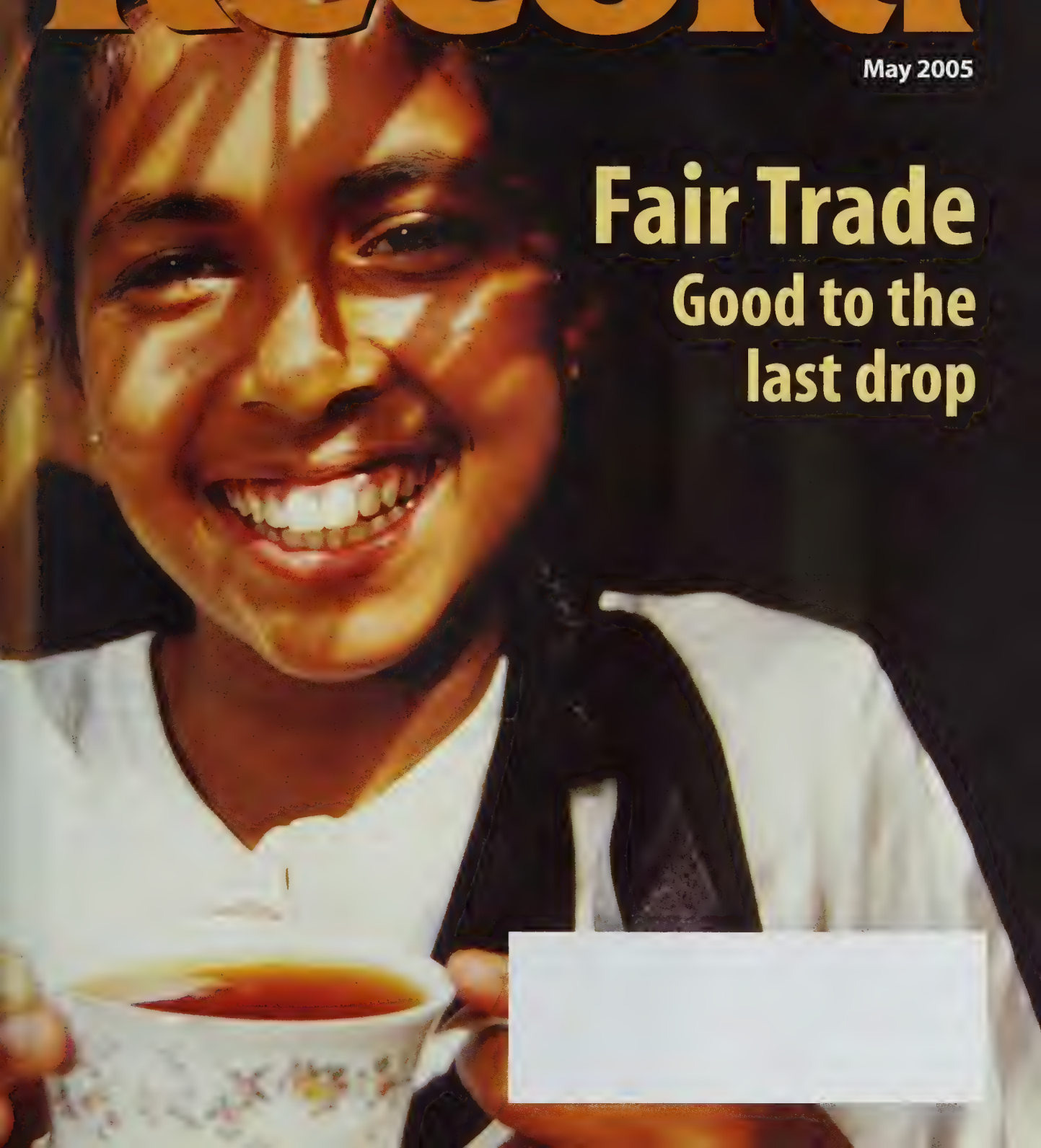


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May 2005

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Photo by Andrew Faiz



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Fair trade is good to the last drop

by Amy MacLachlan

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Malawian nutritionist sacrifices family to educate his countrymen

by Amy MacLachlan

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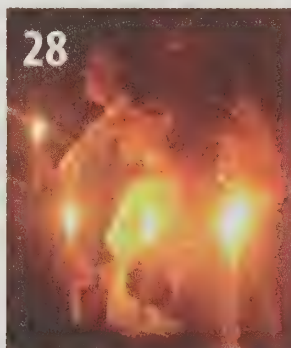
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## Raise a mug for fair trade

**D**o you ever come away after reading the *Record* and wonder how you can help people in need who live in some faraway country in South America, Africa or Asia? I don't mean relief aid, such as for the tsunami, but helping to provide long-term solutions. Are you frustrated by stories about corrupt dictators and pillaging businesses that rape the land and pay workers dirt wages? Do you find the arguments for and against globalization give you a headache?

Well sit down, put the kettle on and make yourself a pot of tea or coffee, because we are going to show you how the cup you are about to drink is a great solution.

The *Presbyterian Record* is sponsoring a competition encouraging fair trade coffee (and tea) consumption. By buying fair trade, you can make a real difference for farmers and their communities that will help them build stable, sustainable local economies. (See the ad on the inside front cover for details.)

The Presbyterian Church already supports the principle of fair trade through Presbyterian World Service and Development. So it follows that every Presbyterian church in Canada should serve fair trade coffee. Otherwise, we're not even paying lip service to the idea.

But what is fair trade, you ask?

Fair trade is what we all want: a fair, reasonable wage for our work, meaning that after a week of honest work, we can feed ourselves, save to buy a home, raise children, build a pension, care for aging parents. It doesn't require an ideology to point out that when farmers are forced to raise cash crops they can't eat for survival (such as coffee, cocoa, bananas) and then don't make enough money to buy basic food and shelter, that isn't fair.

That's where we all come in. Fair trade coffee, chocolate, flowers, textiles and other products are bought on the principle that the producers (farmer, weaver, etc.) receive a living wage in local currency. And coffee is a great place to start.

Coffee is one of the three most traded commodities and the second-largest commodity industry in the world, with more than 400 billion cups consumed each year (second only to water).

Cheap coffee — the stuff sold in big cans — is the result, not of free trade, but of greed and exploitation of human and natural resources. Cheap coffee production involves massive use of pesticides (it is the second most heavily sprayed crop), is the second-leading cause of rainforest destruction and is the leading cause of water contamination where grown. Kenya is a prime example. It has one of the most important, fertile agricultural regions in Africa. Tea and coffee are among its biggest exports. Yet deforestation and water pollution from increased

use of pesticides and fertilizers are among its most formidable problems.

There's no excuse not to serve fair trade, which supports different birds, animals and other plants, pays the farmers and producers a fair wage and doesn't require pesticides. The coffee is not that expensive, it's the best-tasting, it can be delivered fresh-roasted in a matter of days anywhere in Canada and you know you are supporting God's people and God's creation. Besides, coffee has a spiritual past. Islamic monks brewed the first recorded cup of coffee in the 14th century, but it was so potent, they restricted consumption to times of prayer and meditation. (Which is no doubt why it remains the beverage of choice for university students!)

So what about free trade? "Fair trade is not free trade," one of our country's leading business editors once told me. He wouldn't get any disagreement from church and social justice critics — and that's unfortunate.

This editorial is being written during the Global Week of Action on Trade (April 10-16). There have been many meetings around the world involving church leaders, farmers, workers, traders and civil society groups in their countries by calling for fair international trade.

"Trade is important in addressing poverty," said one church official from Kenya. But free trade can help. As another church leader said, "There should be a level playing field between developed countries and developing countries." That's free — and fair — trade. The problem with most world trade is that it's not free or fair. Developed countries like Canada put up tariffs that block or hinder cheap imports of food and textiles to protect our more expensive domestic industries.

More importantly, we help keep other countries in poverty. "We believe that trade must promote human well-being, sustainable communities and economic justice, and that governments must be able to set trade policies to safeguard the rights of all people, especially those living in poverty," reads a petition to the World Trade Organization from the World Council of Churches and endorsed by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

"The biblical standards for economic activity are justice and taking the side of the poor," says WCC general secretary Rev. Sam Kobia said. And he's right. Free trade is not fair trade — yet — but it should be. So drink up!

David Harris

## We cannot afford to risk abuse

Despite greater public awareness surrounding sexual abuse, I was appalled to read in the March 2005 issue that some churches are still reluctant to implement programs that not only safeguard children but also the adults who are responsible for their care. I would point out to congregations who are concerned that complying with the stipulations will be too expensive to implement and enforce, that non-compliance may in the end be costlier, and not only in financial terms. Can we afford not to do everything in our power to ensure that children are safe in our churches? Everyone wants to believe their church is exempt and that it is not possible for sexual abuse to occur in their congregation. Pretending we are not vulnerable will not make this problem go away. I do not believe, as Rev. Peter Coutts writes "that we're boxing ourselves in with a policy that we're obligated to follow that could leave us vulnerable to insurance companies." Far better to be vulnerable to insurance companies than to sexual predators. I applaud the new safety measures and agree with David Harris's excellent editorial that "no one can rationally object to making the church a safer place for ministry".

*Peter McCutcheon  
Toronto, Ont.*

## More to moral issues than right and left

Congratulations to Andrew Faiz on pointing out the imbalanced agenda of those he terms "the Christian Right." Indeed, Jesus' concern extends far beyond sexual issues into the realms of justice, equality and integrity. It is interesting, however, to read Faiz alongside Michael Coren's article calling for a less poisonous debate between the "left" and "right" in the media. Faiz gives a lovely example of the writing Coren describes as typical of the secular Left, albeit from a Christian. He interprets R. Schenck's reasonable statement on Evangelical values as "anti-abortion, ...anti-homosexual, ...anti- ecumenical and anti-multifaith world." Most of the article comes out as an angry critique of a caricature of the worst of the Christian Right, obscuring a good point made which I referred to above.

Coren points out that many, if not most, evangelicals don't fit Faiz's mould of bigoted anti- right wing conservatives. Here in Nepal, we the church are caring for AIDS victims, leprosy victims, the disabled and are advocating for those without a voice, yet most would probably come out sounding very "right-wing" if sounded out on moral issues. We are getting our hands dirty not with newspaper ink but with the dirt and pus from

the suffering, sometimes at considerable risk due to the war here.

A more positive, balanced perspective such as that proposed by Coren will get us a lot farther than simply trying to vilify each other. Moral issues often aren't black or white. Likewise we aren't actually all "right" or "left," and trying to make us so makes constructive, mutually building dialogue more difficult.

*Ling and Richard Schwarz  
Nepal*

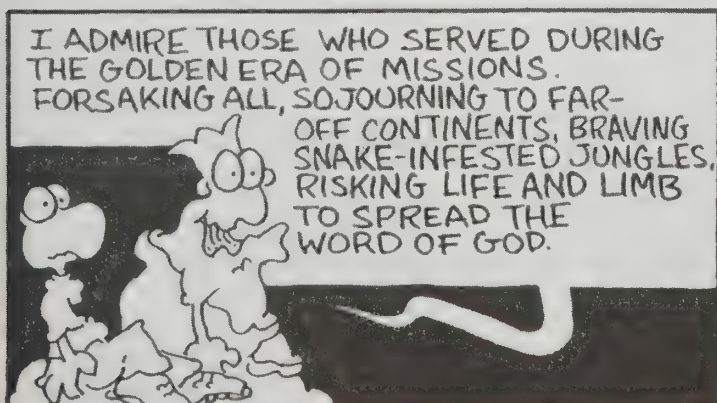
It appears Michael Coren struck a nerve with the self-styled moderates. His article was bang on and it was proven a few pages later by the Faiz hypocritical attack on the Christian Right. Whether the intolerance is from secular or Christian left wing it's still intolerance. The squeals of outrage by Coren's critics demonstrate how deep the denial among the liberal left really is.

*George Manson  
Grand Forks, B.C.*

## Scouts screening since '97

An article in the February issue regarding the church's Leading With Care initiative was very interesting and informative. However, Dorothy Henderson's quote is susceptible to a misreading that might lead one to believe that Scouts

## Pontius' Puddle





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## letters

continued

Canada does not screen its leaders, but rather leaves that responsibility to the church. Scouts Canada has had a rigorous volunteer screening policy in place since 1997 that includes police records checks, interviews and reference checks. This process is mandatory for all volunteers and is conducted independently from our partners/sponsors, including the Presbyterian Church.

As a partner with the Presbyterian Church, Scouts Canada operates programs in 80 churches across Canada.

K. Jennifer Austin

Director of Communications

Scouts Canada

Ottawa

### Dorothy Henderson responds

In the February issue of the *Record* I was quoted as saying: "What parents want their child in Boy Scouts when the leader hasn't been screened?" Neither the reporter nor I meant this as a slur against Scouts Canada, but it would, in hindsight, have been more accurate to say, "What parents would want their child in a community group if the leader hasn't been screened?"

Our denomination has enjoyed a long and valued relationship with Scouts Canada. In fact, we looked to them for leadership for their fine volunteer screening program. Scouting is a valued aspect of our church and community program and we want that to continue.

Dorothy Henderson

Ministry with Children and Youth

Toronto

### Parish nursing needs greater support

I want to thank Amy Cameron for her article on parish nursing in the March issue.

Last year General Assembly designated parish nursing a recognized ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Cameron captured the excitement of this.

The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry has members from 25 faith denominations. The president is Lynn Judd, professor at the faculty of nursing, Mt. Royal College, Calgary, and

a Presbyterian. The national coordinator is Frances Hudson, parish nurse for St. Paul's, Ingersoll, Ont.

The association relies on its membership fees, donations and sponsorship from denominations for its operating budget. Unfortunately, even with deep involvement by Presbyterians, the Presbyterian Church in Canada has not seen its way clear to be a sponsoring member of this leading edge ministry. Hopefully, in future budget deliberations this position will change.

If local Presbyterian congregations wish more information about parish nursing, courses and contacts, or wish to learn how they can raise funds or support the work of the association, I encourage you to visit [www.capnm.ca](http://www.capnm.ca)

This year's annual convention and annual meeting will be held in Toronto from May 27-29. Information about this conference can be found on the web site.

Parish nursing emphasizes the wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Rooted in the vision of Christ the Healer, this ministry grows out of a belief that all faith communities are places of health and healing and the parish nurse has a ministry in promoting wholeness through the integration of faith and health.

Hopefully the *Record* will continue to write stories of the work being done in so many Presbyterian churches by the parish nurses and develop a regular column on faith and health.

Keith Hudson, chair

Funding committee CAPNM

### Colleges correct stipend story

We write to clarify some points in the March *Record* concerning executive and professorial stipends.

In late January, the colleges and the Committee on Theological Education were given the report containing recommendations from Assembly Council concerning changes to executive and professorial stipends. The colleges had no input into this report and are rather mystified as to what it means for our faculty. The indication is that stipends have been increased and money set aside from Presbyterians Sharing to compensate the colleges for the increase. Two things need to

be noted: first, the article says that no specific amount is being suggested for faculty but that this decision is left to the college boards. Such a move signals a departure from the traditional role of the General Assembly in its relationship to the colleges and college faculty. While it may be a needed change, there was no opportunity for input from the colleges. Secondly, the increase from Presbyterians Sharing, while seemingly generous, actually leaves the colleges behind financially if the historical relationship between faculty and executive staff at 50 Wynford is maintained. This report was discussed at length at the February meeting of the Committee on Theological Education. Recommendations were approved that will hopefully begin a process of conversation with Assembly Council to clarify the issues at stake. The college boards will be addressing the budgetary and governance implications of this report at their next meeting.

*Dorcas Gordon*

*Principal, Knox College, Toronto*

*John Vissers,*

*Principal, Presbyterian College, Montreal*

*Stephen Farris,*

*Dean, St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver*

### A writing campaign

I urge all to send a letter to their MPs in response to the Prime Minister's introduction of same-sex marriage legislation. This is not a human rights issue or a Charter of Rights issue: this is a God centered issue. If we believe God's Word then we accept His benchmark. These beautiful verses in Genesis are there to be accepted or rejected. As Canada grapples with this legislation, let's remember that we are called to be His witnesses. We are called to speak in love.

*M. Ann McAfee  
Barrie, Ont.*

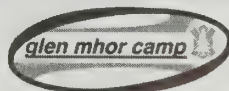
### Thank you for the thank you

Yes, I freely admit I love the magazine. Over the years the *Presbyterian Record* has earned its right to become included in some of my favourite magazine choices namely *National Geographic*, *Canadian Living* and *Our Canada*. When I see that the *Presbyterian Record* made it safely to my mailbox all the way from Toronto, I smile. I read it from cover-to-cover start-

ing with *For the Record*, the feedback from readers, articles by staff writer Amy MacLachlan and other contributing writers such as Phil Callaway. The articles are well written and researched and some even down right funny; think Callaway. I enjoy reading the articles especially in *The Ways We Minister* for spiritual inspiration. I cannot help but feel a great sense of pride; way to go Presbyterians! The *People and Places* section puts a human element to the magazine, as does *Lives Lived*. I admit it might take a few evenings to read the whole magazine with interruptions from my two school-aged sons Ben and Eric i.e. finding lost toys, acting as referee or snack bar attendant but it's more than worth it! Even my fly-fishing/golfing magazine husband, Phil, reads it. Thanks for a great magazine.

*Chantal Cornwall  
Prince Rupert, B.C.*

**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**



### Celebrate 75 years of Christian Camping

Glen Mhor Camp is holding a fundraising dinner and we want you to be part of this celebration.

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**The Reverend Richard Fee**  
**Moderator of the 130th General Assembly.**

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tax receipt for \$50.

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reserve your spot or to book table for eight!

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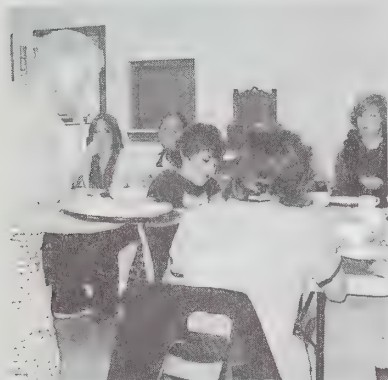
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## Raising funds

Churches across the country have held dinners, concerts, sales and education sessions to raise funds for AIDS victims. These are just a few of the myriad of our mission workers.



**St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont. Education night. African dinner was followed by a talk with Louise Baxter.**



**Kerrisdale, Vancouver. Concert. Andrew Dawes and Jane Coop help raise \$8,000.**



**St. John's, Nfld. Education night, dinner and concert. Mopaya provided the music. \$13,000 was raised.**

# A challenge to all Presbyteries

by Ian Wishart

I am writing this letter as a private individual, not on behalf of our presbytery or any other body.

My concern is to support the appeal of the Moderator for \$500,000 to combat AIDS. We must not let this appeal go unanswered and unsupported. I challenged the Presbytery of Newfoundland to raise \$8,000, and we managed more than \$13,000!

I wrote to all the presbyteries in the Atlantic Synod, suggesting the following targets: Newfoundland \$8,000, Cape Breton \$15,000, Pictou \$20,000, Halifax-Lunenburg \$20,000, Prince Edward Island \$20,000, Saint John \$20,000, Miramichi \$10,000. This would raise over \$100,000 from our Synod. What about your Presbytery? If Atlantic Canada can come up with \$100,000, what about the rest of the country? (As of the end of March, the PCC had raised a little more than half the target.)

Together we should raise more than half a million. We raised over a million for the tsunami victims through PWS&D. AIDS

is worse than the tsunami. That natural disaster was horrendous and dramatic. But what is happening to tens of millions of human beings around the planet, and particularly in Africa, is a tragedy beyond imagining, and one that can be controlled and stopped. A whole generation of adults has been erased in Africa; the next generation of children is orphaned and faces similar annihilation. We can and must make a difference.

At the opening of the General Assembly, on June 5 in Edmonton, Rick Fee, as retiring moderator, should be presented with a cheque for more than half a million dollars for his AIDS appeal.

This is a matter of great importance for our church. Your presbytery and its congregations may have programs in place, and my targets may be too low. I hope so. There is still time. The money for the tsunami was raised in eight weeks.

Rev. Ian Wishart is the clerk for the Presbytery of Newfoundland.

## Presbyterians honour the pope for

As one of the longest reigning popes in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, John Paul II is being remembered for many things. But Presbyterians seem to remember him for one particular contribution: his commitment to ecumenism. "The pope's interest and encouragement to the ecumenical endeavour has been a great source of strength in our work," said Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of the church. Richard Fee, Moderator, sees this as the pope's greatest contribution. "He made a genuine effort towards ecumenism and interfaith dialogue."

The Canadian Council of Churches, a multi-denomination organization committed to fostering ecumenical relations, of which the Presbyterian Church is a member, recognized the pope's role in

this effort. The council remembers his prayers with the Archbishop of Canterbury, his outreach to Eastern Orthodox churches and his inspiration of local ecumenical initiatives in Roman Catholic congregations. "From a Canadian perspective, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has been one of the strongest proponents of ecumenism and the work of the CCC," said Sandra Demson, CCC vice president and an elder at Rosedale, Toronto. "And I think they take their direction and inspiration from the pope. Our perception is that the pope has been a very strong supporter of ecumenical efforts in Canada."

The council's website voices a hope that many are feeling — that his successor will continue this ecumenical priority. Fee



## Blessed is he who trusts God

Rev. Hugo King-Wah Lau, of Chinese, Mississauga, Ont., drew this painting and donated it to Canada Ministries at church offices. The middle portion has 100 different ways of saying "Blessing" in Chinese. Along the borders are quotations from Psalm 3:8 and Psalm 34:8. Seen here with Mr. Lau are Mathew Goslinksy and Rev. Gordon Haynes, both of Canada Ministries.

## is ecumenical efforts *by Amy MacLachlan*

said he doesn't expect any drastic changes of direction for the Roman Catholic church. "He was, in many ways, a very conservative pope and he was there for so many years that he had direct input on shaping the form and structure of that church. It will remain very much in his mold."

However, this lack of change can be frustrating for many who disagree with some of the pope's pronouncements. His ability to stand up for his beliefs in the face of opposition has made him a visible witness to his deep faith. But his firm stance against same-sex marriage, his reiteration of the church's laws against allowing women into the priesthood and forbidding the use of condoms — even in an HIV-positive relationship — left many stunned and angered. After recently visit-

ing South Africa, where she saw children dying from AIDS every day, Demson hopes some of the church's views will eventually change. "The plight of African families, and especially children, is enormous because of the AIDS pandemic," she said. "The church's position is outrageous. I trust that new leadership, in consultation with African leaders, will face the issue squarely and take bold steps."

Noting that his 26-year papacy makes it too difficult to decide on his greatest contribution, Rev. Will Ingram, convener of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee, referred to the pope's 1995 encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*. The document invited the ecumenical community to discuss the role of the papacy in ecumenical affairs. "His public presence in the

world was a great contribution," he said. "Even those in the ecumenical community who don't agree entirely with him, have a very significant respect for the part he played in the issues of human rights, inter-faith relations, opposing militarization and war and speaking on behalf of the poor and broken."

To express their condolences and offer their prayers of support, Fee and Kendall wrote a letter to Archbishop Brendan M. O'Brien, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. They said many will remember the pope for the way in which he stood for peace and human dignity. "His strength in the face of weakness has been an example to the world of the kind of ministry Jesus exercised among us."

*(See Moderator's column on page 51)*



# Overcoming the scourge of malnutrition

*Malawian nutritionist sacrifices family to continue his education*

by Amy MacLachlan

Helping others often entails sacrifice. For Alexander Kalimbira, a professor at the University of Malawi but currently studying nutrition in Canada, putting his own needs second is something he's learned to deal with. "We challenged tradition," said Kalimbira, about the risk he and five male colleagues took when they decided to study home economics and nutrition at university. "You don't see a lot of men in Malawi taking those classes. Men don't usually cook, but in class, we had to cook. The other students jeered at us."

Being pioneers in the field was too much for some to bear, and two of Kalimbira's classmates dropped out of the program. One of their professors tried to reassure the others, saying men are studying nutrition all over the world. It was enough for Kalimbira, and after he graduated with his undergraduate degree, the university brought him on staff. Since then, other men have entered the field. Kalimbira now teaches more men than women in his nutrition classes and his department just hired two male nutritionists.

Kalimbira's interest in nutrition led him to complete his masters in Malawi and Oregon State University. He also completed a one-year internship with UNICEF on a research project on child well-being, and spent time in Sweden, South Africa and Lesotho, soaking up information every place he went. It was only a matter of time then, that he made his way to Canada. Here on a Commonwealth Scholarship (for students expected to make a significant contribution to their own countries on return from Canada) since September 2004, Kalimbira is studying for his PhD in applied nutrition with an emphasis on micronutrients at the University of Guelph.



**Alexander Kalimbira composes many of the songs his church's choir sings in Malawi. He's seen here (black suit) with the choir that sang at the University of Malawi's 2003 convocation.**

While here, the 35-year-old attends Kortright Presbyterian Church in Guelph. His four-year scholarship ends in August 2008 and has kept him away from his family. His seven-year-old son and three-year-old daughter initially didn't mind his absence that much, but are now feeling the sadness of a father who is far away. "My son has said to me, 'Daddy, you said you would be coming back soon, but you're not here. When are you coming to see us?' And I'm not even finished my first year! It's heartbreaking to them and to me to be away, but it's a sacrifice I have to make."

His desire to improve the health of his countrymen wasn't always a goal for Kalimbira. It wasn't until his first university nutrition course when his interest started to grow. "Our professor was telling us about the situation on the ground, and my eyes opened up to what the problem was. I thought, 'Wow! This

is an interesting situation that you can actually do something about.'"

According to a report released last year by UNICEF and the Micronutrient Initiative — a Canadian response to improving child health in developing countries — about one third of the world's population do not meet their physical or intellectual potential because of micronutrient deficiencies. Vitamins A and B, along with iron and iodine are badly needed. Deficiencies not only impact the individual's health, but the health and wealth of the entire country. Programs to help improve the situation are ongoing through UNICEF, World Vision Canada, Canadian

Foodgrains Bank and partners of the Presbyterian church. Food fortification, vitamin supplements and diet diversification are all popular methods to increase nutrition.

"As a nutritionist, I get emotional over how big our problems are. The least contribution I can make is to sit back and say I helped — even if that just means training more nutritionists or doing research to change policies that impact the lives of women and children. That would give me satisfaction."

Although he misses the familiarity of Malawi, serving his home congregation as an elder and composing music for the church choir, Kalimbira is grateful for his time in Canada. "My eyes keep opening up," he said. "I'm always learning something new. Even if the program ended today, there is a great deal I've already learned, especially how to approach problems we already have." ■

# Class action seeks billions in damages

Former students of native residential schools have filed a \$12.5 billion lawsuit against the federal government and the churches who ran the schools. The 90,000 claimants are seeking compensation for loss of language and culture.

The suit has to be certified by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice which would allow all living former students of residential schools to file together. Liability would go beyond the church's original agreement with the federal government, which is currently capped at \$2.1 million. "If it is certified, it means

## 'There are better ways than litigation to deal with this issue'

*Stephen Kendall*

many more years of litigation for everyone," said Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk. "But right now, it's not clear what our role would be."

The suit has precedence in a December decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal which allowed former students of the Anglican-connected Mohawk Institute near Brantford, Ont., to file together. All 1,400 students who attended the school between 1922 and 1969 are included. The decision marks the first of its type in Canada.

The churches' agreements with the government — including that of the Presbyterian church — includes the right to defend against such suits. "The government is opposing certification," said Kendall, "and we are a part of a group of about 45 religious organizations that are also opposing it."

Kendall said the church is interested in pursuing healing and reconciliation and resolving claims through the Alternative Dispute Resolution process — a late-2003 agreement that settles claims out of court, in a supposedly faster and gentler manner.

Kendall admitted a new program may need to be created to address some sort of compensation for language and cul-

ture losses if required by the courts, but said the Presbyterian church and others already have healing and reconciliation programs in place to help with such cases. He said these programs "are fundamental to how we move forward." The church's original agreement with the government includes a process of how the affected parties might handle language and culture claims. "There are better ways than litigation to deal with the issues, including loss of language and culture," said Kendall.

There were 130 residential schools in Canada run by the government and the Presbyterian, Anglican, United and Roman Catholic churches. The Presbyterian church has the fewest claims, with about 150.

In an effort to continue the healing and reconciliation process for victims of residential schools abuse, churches are supporting the continuation of a government program called the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Although slated to end when funds run out, churches say the program is helpful and should continue. The government has committed another \$40 million as bridge money for the next two years for such work, while long-term funding is sought from the public sector. *AM*

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Jul 17/05 - 14 Days
- **SCOTTISH ISLANDS ADVENTURE**  
Aug 06/05 - 15 Days
  - **HEART OF EUROPE**  
Sept 14/05 - 14 Days
- **THE BEST OF IRELAND**  
Sept 22/05 - 16 Days
  - **CHINA & HONG KONG**  
Sept 23/05 - 19 Days
- **KENYA & TANZANIA**  
Oct 1/05 - 19 Days
  - **HERITAGE OF TURKEY**  
Oct 4/05 - 19 Days
- **GREECE - IN THE STEPS OF ST. PAUL**  
Oct 6/05 - 17 Days

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July 29/05 - 13 Days
  - **ICELAND & THE ATLANTIC ISLES**  
Aug 1/05 - 20 Days
- **RUSSIAN WATERWAYS**  
Aug 5/05 - 17 Days
  - **ALASKA & YUKON**  
Aug 13 & Aug 20/05 - 12 Days
- **ALASKA INSIDE PASSAGE**  
Jul 6, Aug 20, Sept 7/05 - 7 Days
  - **CANADIAN ROCKIES & ALASKA**  
Aug 20/05 - 11 Days
- **CANADA & NEW ENGLAND**  
Sep 24/05 - 8 Days
  - **UKRAINIAN WATERWAYS**  
Sept 24/05 - 16 Days
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## Refugee rights petition put on hold

The justice initiatives committee of KAIROS, of which the PCC is a member, presented the federal government with a petition bearing more than 10,000 names urging the immediate implementation of refugee appeals as promised.

Refugee rights groups say the government has "insisted on delaying" creation of a refugee rights division for the past three years. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, created in 2002, reduced the initial decision-maker panel which reviews refugee claims from two to one. There is an appeal provision in the act, but the government has failed to implement it thus far. The petition asks the government to implement the appeals procedure.

The petition circulated the national offices of the Presbyterian church, encouraged by Justice Ministries and Presbyterian World Service and Development, who work closely with KAIROS. The petition was presented to the House of Commons on April 4, Refugee Rights Day.  
AM



Photo by Art Babych

**Joe Gunn, of KAIROS, holds up a petition at a news conference on Parliament Hill that calls on the federal government to immediately implement the Refugee Appeal Division. Refugee rights groups say the government has delayed the process for three years.**

## Living history a loving chapel

When the stunning First Church, Montreal, building was sold to a developer in the 1980s the advertising campaign promised "a stained glass window in every condo". First (1786-1984) was once amongst the most important congregations in Montreal, and was itself a union of Chalmers and St. Gabriel's, the latter of which dated to 1784. In 1984 it joined with Knox, Crescent, Kensington.

A year ago St. Gabriel's Chapel was dedicated at Knox, Crescent, Kensington and First. It was the completion of Howard Dearlove's vision, and helped to fruition by many, including J. Kenneth MacLeod. Present at the service was Ian Campbell, the sole surviving son of Rev. Malcolm A. Campbell, who served First as minister for over 50 years.

The lovely chapel houses some items from First's long history, including a stone and marble baptismal font, seen here, a beautiful communion table and elders' chairs.

The dedication service was conducted by Mr. MacLeod (right), and assisted by Dr. R. Sheldon MacKenzie, (above) a former minister of First Presbyterian.



# Assembly Council adopts new stipend policy

by Amy MacLachlan

Assembly Council adopted a new policy for setting executive and professorial stipends that will go to General Assembly for approval. There was confusion regarding the council's role in this matter and the new policy places responsibility with the council, although assembly maintains final say.

Some issues are still being considered including whether or not setting professorial stipends should be included in the policy (which is being worked on in consultation with the committee on theological education). Because of this, the grid of revised executive and professorial stipends will be submitted to the assembly for information only.

The issue of cost-sharing for maternity/parental leave has bounced back and forth between the Pension and Benefits Board and the council since the matter came to General Assembly in 2003. Questions revolve around the clarity of the policy and the responsibilities of the congregation and national church when covering expenses of pulpit supply. Council is recommending placing this matter with Pension and Benefits, who will be the sole group (with some input from the chief financial officer and the associate secretary of ministry and church vocations) to further study the issue of cost sharing and to continue reviewing the policy currently in place.

As FLAMES comes to an end, the long range planning committee has devised a new focus for the church. Recommendations will go to the assembly to make the next year (beginning Nov. 27, the first Sunday of Advent) a year of preparation for the Sabbath and the following year (beginning Nov. 26, 2006) a Sabbath year, with the theme of Weaving the Church that Needs to Be. Rev. Scott McAndless, convener, said, "The committee recommends the church focus on four areas during this time: renewing

God's purpose, using the gifts of God's people, engaging the world and healing divisions. This is not a time to do nothing, but rather a time to set hearts and minds on God and on his call to the church."

- The Healing and Reconciliation Task Force will be formally dissolved as of June 10. The team had spent the last year working on a national strategy for engaging congregations in the healing process with aboriginals. Continuing where the original team left off, the newly formed Healing and Reconcilia-

**'The committee recommends the church focus on four areas: renewing God's purpose, using the gifts of God's people, engaging the world and healing divisions'**

tion Program Design Team will work on creating a national program, addressing concerns the council had about the former team's report. The new team has already met once and is expected to finish its work by year's end.

- Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, reported on the legal matters surrounding the Alternative Dispute Resolution process for former students of residential schools. It is expected that the Presbyterian church will see at least 70 claims settled in the next 12 months, thanks to a push by the Canadian government's Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution to facilitate at least 1,000 ADR cases in the coming year.

- Moderator Richard Fee will be the sole nominee put forward for the position of General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. He will succeed Rev. Ian Morrison, who is retiring after nine

years. The succession is slated for Sept. 1, with about one month of overlap. Morrison thanked the council for its well-wishes and said he is "looking forward to other ways of serving the church."

- The 132nd assembly be in St. Catharines, Ont., in 2006, although its fate was momentarily threatened by an overture from the Presbytery of Peace River. The request hoped to suspend next year's assembly and redirect the funds (about \$500,000) to world crisis needs. The clerks of the assembly and the council resigned the request, saying the Book of Forms implies that the assembly will meet each year. Therefore, any change would require a change to the church's laws under the Barrier Act. They also said the work of the church need not be suspended in order to foster generosity. An overture from the Presbytery of Cape Breton to host the 136th assembly in 2010 was granted.

The moderator in his report mentioned the openness with which he has been received by congregations and the honest conversations he's had with Presbyterians. He spoke of his recent visit to Israel where he attended the opening of the new Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, about the death of Pope John Paul II, about meetings with members of parliament, about the response of the church to the tsunami disaster and the need for a response to lesser-known tragedies such as the spread of AIDS due to rampant prostitution. He also responded to the *Presbyterian Record's* sliding subscriptions due to the reporting of controversial issues. Fee urged the council to stay loyal to the *Record*. He said he realizes change is difficult, and that individuals should continue to express their views to the magazine, but it is an important forum for discussion and debate. **R**



## Presbyterian college helps develop lay leadership

Lay people in Manitoba and Northern Ontario are benefitting for a \$12,000 Cdn grant to Presbyterian College, Montreal. The American grant, handed out last May, has already enabled 19 congregations to participate in a lay leadership program devoted to improving worship. "It's exciting to work with committed and gifted lay people who have a passion for the church of Jesus Christ and want to use their gifts to fulfill our highest calling as human beings — the worship and praise of God," said Peter Bush, minister at Knox, Mitchell, Ont., and co-director of the project along with Christine O'Reilly, minister of a two-point charge in southwestern Ont. "We're honoured and humbled to work with such amazing people."

The Worship renewal grant was awarded by the Calvin Institute of

Christian Worship at Calvin College in Michigan. Funds are from the Lilly Endowment Inc., a U.S. based trust fund concerned with community development, education and religion. The project is also supported by Canada Ministries.

As the college is already committed to educating the laity — it offers a diploma in lay leadership — the goal of the project is to encourage lay people to use their gifts to preach, plan and lead worship services, and equip them with the skills to do so. The results are exciting. "Lay leaders start to find their voice and role in worship, discovering spiritual gifts they never knew they had," said Bush.

O'Reilly and Bush have travelled north to work with teams of lay people from Presbyterian congregations. They

were in Timmins working with the Temiskaming regional ministry team in June 2004 and completed a second trip north in February. The duo worked with the Presbytery of Brandon last October and will return in May.

Congregations also receive resources to start building a worship and sermon preparation library. "There's wonder and amazement expressed that an American college would care so much about small Canadian congregations to give them \$300-worth of worship resources," said Bush.

Presbyterian College is one of two Canadian projects to receive last year's grant from a total of 200 proposals. Grant recipients represent congregations and schools from 16 denominations in the U.S. and Canada.

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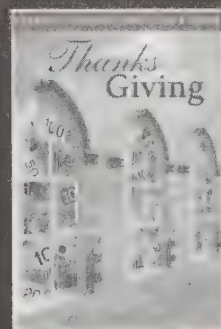
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## Bonhoeffer's choice

It's been 60 years since Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged, along with six others, by the SS, for a conspiracy against Nazi dictator Adolph Hitler. His death at 39 was extraordinary on several counts. His Lutheran tradition had inculcated a sense of duty to obey the state as an authority ordained by God, not to plot treason against it. In the 1930s, he had been advocating pacifism as the Christian response to violence, yet the plot against Hitler was to involve complicity in an attempted assassination. Changing circumstances repeatedly forced Bonhoeffer to re-examine what obedience to God required in a context where politicized evil became apocalyptic in scale.

Bonhoeffer was assured a comfortable university career or he could have lived safely in the United States. Instead he chose to wade into complicated moral ambiguity in an effort to help his neighbours live before God.

He asked the simple but searching question, Who is Christ for us today? Christianity has too often run away from the world as it is, trying to find for God a last refuge in a "religious" corner secure from science and critical thought.

*Rev. Keith Clements, general secretary of the Conference of European Churches*  
ENI



## PC(USA) membership drops significantly

The Presbyterian Church (USA) saw the largest drop among mainline churches in the United States last year. According to the National Council of Churches' 2005 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*, PC(USA) fell almost five per cent, with about 3.2 million members remaining. It ranks ninth on the list of America's 25 largest churches. Other denominations to decline include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, American Baptist Churches in the USA and the United Church of Christ.

Conversely, Pentecostal and African American churches are enjoying increased numbers. Three of the largest 25 churches in the U.S. are Pentecostal and six are African American, according to the yearbook. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with more than 5.5 million members, rose from the fifth- to fourth-largest church in the U.S., with a

growth of nearly two per cent last year. The Orthodox Church in America had its membership reach the one million mark, with a growth of more than 11 per cent.

Although it only saw a growth margin of just over one per cent, the Catholic Church remains the largest faith group in the U.S. with more than 67 million members. Second-largest is the Southern Baptist Convention followed by the United Methodist Church, with about 16.5 million and eight million members, respectively.

About one-third of the world's two billion Christians are Roman Catholic. They're followed by independent denominations (426 million), Protestants (375 million), Orthodox (219 million) and Anglicans (79 million). About 33 per cent of the world's population considers themselves Christian.

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## CCC seeing red

The country's largest ecumenical organization, the Canadian Council of Churches, will again run at a deficit for 2005. Its \$326,000 budget includes a projected deficit of \$8,000. The council is funded by its 19 member churches. The Presbyterian Church contributes \$25,000 a year. "We're doing everything possible to bring it down, but we're operating on a bare-bones budget," said general secretary Rev. Karen Hamilton. "There's nothing left to cut."

Hamilton said rising expenses and tighter financial situations of churches are the culprits. A move to the Toronto School of Theology in July is not motivated by cost, but because of better visibility and opportunities for networking.

Individuals can support the council by becoming "friends of the CCC." A donation warrants a tax receipt, the council's newsletter and press releases.

AM

## Apology

In the March issue there was a comment in my interview with Reg Bibby about "pie eyed aboriginals." The phrase was used in a story he told that criticized a local church for its racism. I do not believe Mr. Bibby intended the phrase in a racist manner; his point was that the church was comfortable with "bedraggled" non-natives in its service. Nor was it my intention to allow its use in any derogatory sense. However, the phrase itself speaks of a systemic attitude towards First Nations people. This language is so deeply imbedded into our culture we fail to recognize its assumptions. On behalf of Mr. Bibby and myself, I apologize for the use of this casual assumption and for any pain it may have caused.

*Andrew Faiz*  
Managing editor



# people & places

A happy Rev. Robert Sinasac (middle) was recognized as ordained missionary this January into the charge of Knox, New Galsgow; Knox, Kintyre; and St. John's, Rodney, in the Presbytery of London, Ont. Wishing him on are Rev. Michael Stol, Hugette Sinasac and Rev. Kathy Fraser.



Rev. David Robertson continues a family tradition: he presided over the marriage of her grandparents, and baptized her mother Megan, and now baptizes Emily Nicole Aprim at Kerrisdale, Vancouver. Also seen are her proud papa Ben and Rev. Glenn Inglis. This ceremony was a blending of both Assyrian and Presbyterian cultures. Welcome to a brand new world, Emily.

Rev. Dr. Floyd and Claire McPhee retired from Orangedale, River Denys and Malgowatch, Cape Breton, N.S., last November, after serving for three years. They return to Ottawa.



Who doesn't love a man in an apron? These handsome caterers at St. Paul's, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., were among the men who prepared and served the ladies of the congregation a nourishing lunch. The men are Grady Hess, Dave McArthur and Norman Langevin.

## Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PCRecord@presbyterian.ca](mailto:PCRecord@presbyterian.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to:

The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

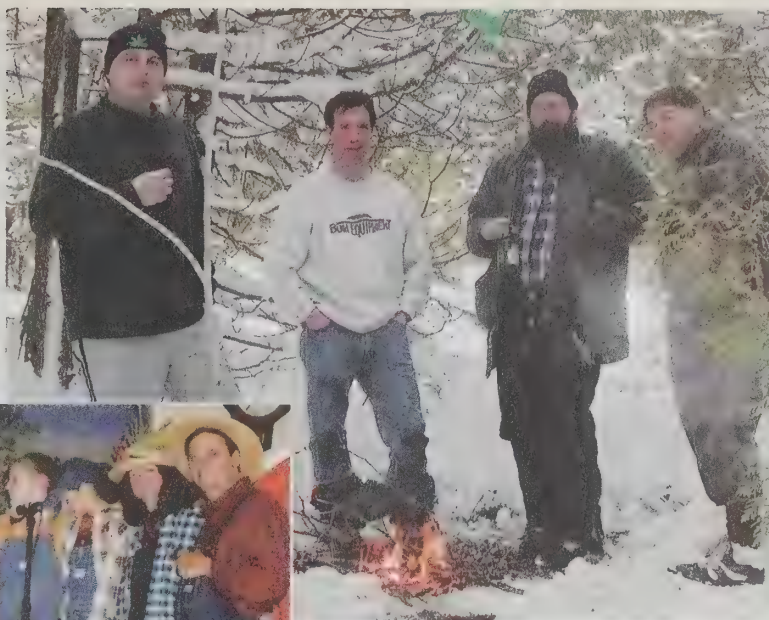
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified.

The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.

Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.



They read the book, *Wild At Heart*, by John Eldridge, but were not content to wait for the movie. Inspired, these men from St. Andrew's, Owen Sound, Ont., went out into the wilds of winter camping in Bruce Peninsula national park. The adventurers are Steve Green, Paul Cline, Randy Purdy and Rev. Scott Sinclair. The photographer is Bruce Price.



A musical mission at Ivy, Ont. Acorns To Oaks, their first musical raised 161 kg. of food for the local food bank. Now, that's a joyful noise.



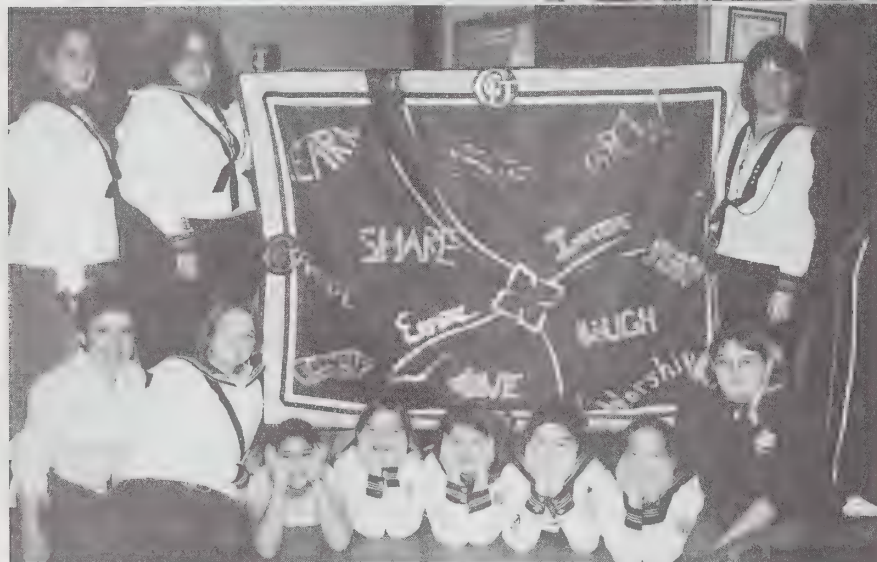
The children at St. Mark's, Mississauga, Ont., demonstrate and represent the true meaning of the congregational motto: Out of many nations, we are one family.



What gifts can we bring, what present, what token? These four hardy mission workers, Janine and Nicole Charron and Ryan and John Green, helped collect, along with the rest of the Sunday school at St. Andrew's, Bowmanville, Ont., a large variety of winter gear and toiletries, and personally delivered them to Evangel Hall in Toronto.



Don't let the cuteness fool you. These siblings, Kooper, Drew and Austin are also great fundraisers. With some passing help from their parents Rev. Steve and Kathy Boose, they organized a Treasure Sale at St. Andrew's, Strathroy, Ont., and raised nearly \$750 for PWS&D's Tsunami relief. That'll put a smile on anybody's face.



CGIT rocks! And these young ladies at Westminister, Ottawa, are proud to raise their brand new banner high. From the back: Jennifer Thiboutot, Sharon Tinkess, Carol Ann Joiner, Sarah Kitchen. Up front: Debbie O'Hara, Kaitlyn Lamont, Christine Hanbury, Tessa Gauvin, Laura Jarecsni, Aimee McAlea, Celia Reneaud, Amanda Dumochel. Missing but proud CGITers, Kyla Stairs and Chelsea Jones.

Marion and Katherine MacDonald of Victoria, Birch Grove, N.S., present an Advent wreath for dedication to the memory of their aunt Annie MacAulay and uncle John A. Campbell who had passed away earlier in the year. Clerk of Session Robert Johnson and Rev. Ritchie Robinson join them.

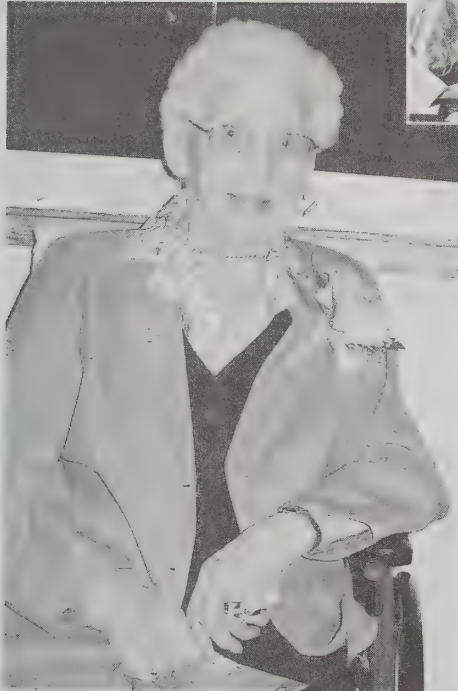


On Dec. 18, the Sunday school of St. John's, Cresswell, Ont., entered a float in the hamlet's Santa Claus Parade. Afterwards participants and onlookers congregated in the church hall for hot drinks and goodies.





They call themselves The Lost Pilgrims and they play the rock of ages. Rockin' the house at Knox, Dunnville, Ont., are Scott Cooper, Hugh Donnelly, David Linderma and Stephen Kendall.



On March 23, friends and family joined together to celebrate the 100th birthday of Olivenia Moon, a charter member of Varsity Acres, Calgary. She was born in northern England and moved to Canada in 1966 to be near her son and his wife. She remains a dedicated member of VAPC and has served this church faithfully since its inception.

Cake of the Month: In January, Comox Valley, B.C. celebrated its 10th anniversary, with the newly inducted Rev. D'Arcy Lade. The Record has already made room for Comox Valley's 20th anniversary, and Rev. Lade's 10th as its minister.



The children at St. Giles, Sarnia, Ont., raised \$700 for the children in Kenya. And then they partied with Kenyan hymns led by Rev. Joseph Mothaly who works with PCC's Kenyan missionary Rick Allen.





# Mad about the bean

*Fair trade is good to the last drop*

by Amy MacLachlan

**T**he green hills and fertile coffee fields of Colombia seem worlds away from the busy roads, cold pavement and towering skyscrapers of Toronto. But the congregation at Glebe Church made the connection. Being small, they wondered what one congregation could do to help the plight of coffee farmers and their families. They didn't have to look far to discover a solution, and began selling fair trade coffee a year ago. Glebe doesn't make any profits from the sales — they simply want to promote the coffee and increase awareness of the issues surrounding it. "Farmers selling coffee get a fair price so they can educate their children, feed their families and improve their land," said Bob Elliott, an elder at Glebe.



The congregation is one of a growing number of people lending support to fair trade. Across Canada, grocery stores, independent shops, cafes and churches are stocking their shelves with products that respect those who produce them. Having gained momentum for the past quarter century, the issue of fair trade has made its way to the national offices of the Presbyterian church — planting itself squarely in the communal coffee machine since February 2002. “It’s not about seismic changes,” said Stephen Allen, associate secretary for justice ministries. “The option is to either do something or absolutely nothing. And that’s no option.”

Fair trade proponents say small farmers in developing countries are being exploited by middlemen and multinational corporations who refuse to acknowledge their plight while stuffing the pockets of the wealthy. Trade deals like the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement have been criticized for impoverishing Mexican peasants already struggling to make ends meet. “NAFTA is a way of handing over their land, resources and future to multinational corporations on a silver platter,” said former moderator Rev. Mark Lewis, who recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Mexico.

Besides writing to government representatives calling for the just treatment of farmers who provide North Americans with coffee, fruit and sugar, consumers can take a stand — and contribute to farmer’s well-being — by buying fair trade products. The fair trade logo means, among other things, that farmers were paid a fair wage for their products. “It guarantees a minimal standard, below which the price will not fall,” said Allen. Farmers receive a minimum of \$1.54 Cdn per pound of green coffee beans in fair trade agreements. If the worldwide price of coffee goes up, so does the amount paid to farmers.

TransFair Canada certifies fair trade products in this country. It can track a product from the producer to the super-market shelves, guaranteeing fair trade practices were followed along the way. “Every purchase is important and has an impact on the lives of other people,” said Chantal Havard, a TransFair spokeswoman.

## Beans make a difference

Fair trade began about 50 years ago in Africa and Europe when small farmers began working with international aid organizations. The cooperation helped protect farmers against fluctuating market prices and crooked intermediaries, and guaranteed them a dependable market. Alternative trade organizations soon evolved, run mostly by volunteers, where fairly traded products were sold. For-profit companies soon followed, and fair trade became a staple in many countries.

To regulate the industry and increase consumer confidence, an international system of fair trade certification and labelling came into existence in the late 1980s. TransFair Canada is the only third-party licensing body to certify fair trade products in Canada, on behalf of Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). FLO works in 45 countries, certifying producer organizations and the trade between them and importers. Products must adhere to FLO standards and companies must submit updates and undergo regular monitoring.

Handicrafts are certified differently, under the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT), which certifies entire companies, rather than individual products. Ten Thousand Villages is one such example. Companies certified by IFAT — of which there are only five in Canada — generally have a mission and vision that reflects fair trade in all their practices.

Some fair trade organizations have a problem with companies that are jumping on the bandwagon by offering one fair trade product while their staples aren’t governed by the same practices. Stacey Toews, sales and education manager at Level Grounds Trading Co. in B.C., said consumers shouldn’t only look for the fair trade label, but should ask questions about the company itself. “A company can sell a fair trade product but have no fair trade mission or heart,” he said.

Toews said the problem with non-fair trade companies is that many buy their coffee through brokers — a process that disrupts the ideal fair trade relationship of farmer-retailer-consumer. Although this depersonalized method doesn’t necessarily mean companies are skirting fair trade guidelines, it ignores the general principle of fair trade. “The point of fair trade is to take out the middleman making all the money and get back to the land and pay farmers fairly for their product. Some companies aren’t getting their hands dirty.”

According to Toews, the future of fair trade in Canada rests upon the growth in sales of other fair trade products such as sugar, tea and fruit. He said coffee — the second-most highly traded product in the world next to oil — is currently the face of fair trade because “it’s sexy — it’s like wine.” It’s also an easily-purchased commodity when brokers are used. “It’s a convenient way to get your foot in the door and have your company portrayed as ethical,” he said.

Ken Kim, a Presbyterian missionary in Guatemala who monitors the working conditions of farmers and farm workers, said fair trade can and does benefit farmers. “Farmers know how much they’ll receive ahead of time for their products and can plan accordingly,” he said.

However, there is a flip side to this coin. Kim said although the farm owner may benefit, his labourers who work in the fields may not be so lucky. “Who is this farmer?” he asked. “Is it a single owner, a co-op, a community endeavour? Unless it’s a small size family plot comprising the individual farmer and his immediate family members, the fair trade farmer must hire labourers. Workers are paid for productivity, thus the more beans picked, the greater the remuneration. In Guatemala, workers during the coffee harvest are not paid the daily minimum wage applicable for agricultural workers.”

Kim also said in order to be eligible for fair trade programs limited to smaller co-ops, the trend in Guatemala is for large family farmers to divide their huge plantations into smaller co-ops led by family members.

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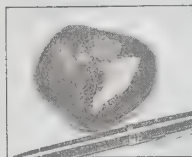
**‘A company can sell a fair trade product but have no fair trade mission or heart’**

*Stacey Toews*

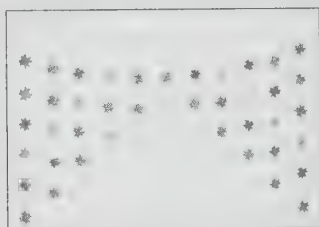


# Ten Thousand Villages best sellers

- 1.** Medium roast Arabica coffee;  
Colombia. \$12.00



- 2.** Lacquered  
paperweight rock;  
Vietnam. \$7.00



- 3.** Multi-coloured doorway  
stars; Bangladesh. \$8.00

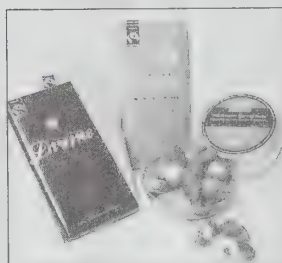
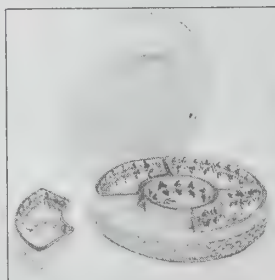
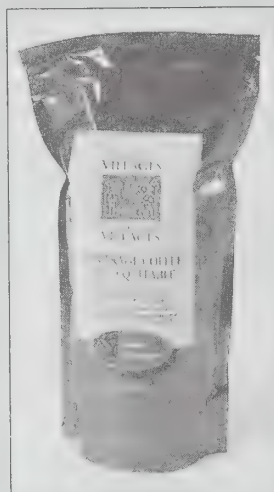
- 4.** Ceramic dishes;  
Vietnam. \$43.00



- 5.** Bird water whistle;  
Cameroon. \$5.00

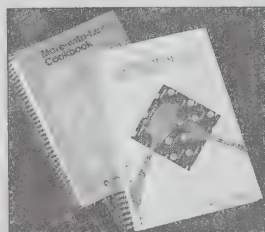


- 7.** Multi-coloured palm  
leaf streamers;  
India. \$4.00



- 6.**  
Cocoa bean  
chocolate;  
Ghana. \$3.98

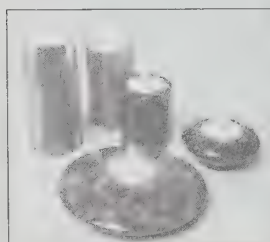
- 8.** Wooden garden  
herons; Indonesia.  
\$60 - \$85



- 9.** Extending the Table  
cookbook. \$26.95



- 10.** Onyx Candle holders; Pakistan.  
\$7.00 - \$15.00



Since 1998, fair trade coffee sales in Canada have jumped from about 21,000 kilograms to almost 656,000 kilograms in 2003. Coffee's popularity has brought more products to the market including tea, chocolate, fruit and sugar. Textiles and handicrafts can also be certified, and are available through places like Ten Thousand Villages — an initiative of the Mennonite Church, but now an ecumenical effort. According to TransFair Canada, global sales of fair trade labelled products grew by more than 42 per cent between 2002 and 2003.

Some of the growth can be accounted for by larger companies opting to introduce a fair trade line into their regular product lineup. Loblaws, the country's largest grocer, recently introduced Kicking Horse coffee — a certified brand available in their natural foods section. Presently available in Ontario, the line may expand to other stores and products if the response is favourable.

Coffee giant Starbucks brought fair trade coffee to its U.S. stores in 2000. Four years later, Starbucks purchased 4.8 million pounds of certified coffee (out of 299 million pounds total). Starbucks also offers a certified organic coffee and a shade-grown variety (a practice that is kinder to the environment). Together, purchases of these coffees have almost doubled since 2003.

Second Cup — Canada's 15-year-old answer to the Starbucks powerhouse — doesn't offer certified fairly traded coffee, but, the company says it is committed to paying farmers a fair price for their beans and supporting community programs where beans are grown. New Second Cup franchisees are required to visit Costa Rica — their largest supplier — to see the farms and gain an understanding of the process. "To have a sustainable high quality crop year after year, you have to take care of the people and the land," said Second Cup media representative Rachel Douglas. "You have to be able to put your hand on your heart and know you're treating people with respect."

The Presbyterian Church supports the work of others in this area. Representatives attended an ecumenical conference on trade and globalization in January 2004. The result was *What Does God*

*Require of Us? A Declaration for Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life.* The document discusses trade issues between Canada, the United States and Mexico, and was adopted by General Assembly last summer.

Presbyterian World Service & Development supports TransFair Canada

## **'Each individual or congregation just doing one thing is a worthwhile practical response'**

*Stephen Allen*

through an annual \$1,500 grant for educating Canadians on fair trade. It also supports KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives), an ecumenical effort active in global partnerships and trade and justice issues. Guy Smagghe, PWS&D's program coordinator for Central America and India, says fair trade is

an important endeavour. He said the concept extends beyond paying farmers a fair price; it also gives them a guaranteed market, supports environmental, organic and sustainable practices and invests in community development programs.

Supporting fair trade initiatives is something Christians can do to fulfill their call to care for the poor. "Fair trade coffee demonstrates that it is possible to have a trade relationship that's based on the ethic of equity," said Allen. "Fair trade is a way of imagining a Biblical model of living together and of responding faithfully to the world. Each individual or congregation just doing one thing is a worthwhile practical response."

That response is cropping up more and more in Canada's churches. Glebe's Bob Elliott orders their coffee from a fair trade coffee shop in Toronto. Since an order of 20 pounds fetches a price break, Glebe has partnered with two United Churches in order to reach the quota. The order is placed Tuesday,



## **The cost of coffee**

Ethics don't have to be expensive, it's just a matter of shopping around. Just let your taste buds and your budget decide.

### **Level Ground Trading Co. Ltd. — B.C.**

#### ***TransFair-certified fair trade coffees***

One pound of their Café San Miguel, Colombian, costs eight dollars to \$14, dependent on volume purchased and shipping costs. The lower price is available to churches.

### **Alternative Grounds — Toronto**

#### ***TransFair-certified fair trade coffees***

One pound costs nine dollars to \$14.50 dependent on volume purchased, type of coffee and shipping costs.

### **Second Cup**

#### ***Non-certified coffees***

Though their coffee is not certified as fair trade, they claim to provide "an incremental option for the farmer to earn a premium for growing and harvesting the highest quality coffees". Prices range from \$11.95 to \$15.95 per pound.

### **Starbucks**

#### ***TransFair-certified and non-certified coffees***

Their certified coffees are in the \$15 range per pound.

### **Timothy's World Coffee**

#### ***TransFair-certified and non-certified coffees***

Coffees range from \$10 to \$14 per pound.

### **Loblaws/Real Canadian Superstore**

Certified coffee is \$15 per pound; non-certified can be as little as a third of that cost.

## **Survey says only 11 per cent**

The *Record* conducted an unofficial survey of 18 churches across the country. Only two serve fair trade coffee. Social consciousness was the main reason for making the switch. St. Andrew's, Ottawa, has been serving fair trade coffee for about five years, saying it "is a way in which we should be supporting others." Briarwood, Montreal, serves fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate. "It's been incorporated into our identity," said Rev. Derek Macleod.

The main reason given for not switching was the price, as many churches serve the most economical coffee they can find. Taste was sometimes a concern. Others were interested but didn't know where to get it, or weren't aware of the fair trade concept at all. "It hasn't really come up as an option," said Colin Campbell, session clerk at Trinity York Mills, Toronto. "Most people think coffee is coffee. The idea of fair trade hasn't been absorbed yet."



## Fair trade ministry proves a community success

St. Columba by the Lake, in Pointe Claire, PQ has been operating a fair trade store for nearly a decade. Over the years they have acted on scripture, raised their community profile and tripled their sales to about \$400,000 a year. "We have our building on a very forgotten back street of suburban Montreal. We have very little visual prominence in the community, which is symbolic of what's happened to many suburban Christians. Their faith is private and hidden away," said Rev. Ian Fraser. "But we decided we wanted to be more prominent in what we believe and get the church back on the main street of the community."

The Ten Thousand Villages store, in partnership with two United Church congregations, was originally run by church volunteers, along with a paid manager. Over the years, volunteers from the community at large have taken part, which has been an outreach in itself. "It's always been a key component of how we live our faith," said Fraser. "It's not about going overseas, but about building partnerships with people, which is a key facet to fair trade."

Quebec has the most sales of fair trade coffee, followed by British Columbia. It's difficult to say exactly why this is the case, but there are some good guesses. "Some of the fair trade pioneers have been from Quebec," said Chantal Havard of TransFair Canada. "There were also several strong NGOs in Quebec involved in promoting fair trade from the start."

The project has also been an entry point for congregation members who may not get involved in the church's work. "It allows us to use people's talents that otherwise wouldn't be used, like marketing, financing and business," said Fraser, who acts as board president. "And it makes mission a tangible thing and allows people to think differently about the world and the foundations of the Christian faith." Thanks to this success, two more stores have opened in Montreal. Together, the three stores lead Ten Thousand Villages sales across Canada.

AM

## Church-supported Taco Bell boycott ends

Tomato farm workers in Florida won their battle for higher wages and better working conditions thanks to a mass rally in March. Workers, union members and faith-based supporters converged at Yum! Brands' headquarters in Louisville, Ky., Taco Bell's parent company. The agreement ended a consumer boycott of Taco Bell which began in 2001.

The rally was organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, whose members pick tomatoes for Taco Bell products. In a joint announcement, the CIW and Taco Bell said they will work together to improve working conditions in the Florida tomato industry, and Taco Bell will pay the penny-per-pound surcharge demanded by workers. The CIW said the agreement "sets a new standard of social responsibility for the fast-food industry."

"This is really, really good news," said Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA, a key supporter of the boycott. "I hope this victory will energize all efforts to provide working people with a living wage."

Edgar said the agreement is especially good news considering the recent U.S. Senate vote not to raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25. The Presbyterian Church (USA), a member of the NCC, was among those supporting the boycott.

Yum! Brands is the world's largest restaurant company. Its five largest chains are Pizza Hut, KFC, Taco Bell, Long John Silver and A&W. In 2004, Taco Bell purchased approximately 10 million pounds of Florida tomatoes, serving more than 35 million consumers each week in the U.S.

AM with files from ENI

beans are roasted Wednesday and delivered Friday. Glebe members hope to entice more congregations to take part. "We hope to harmonize some of our outreach programs because we're all small, so we can't always take on big projects," said Elliott. "If we get together, we can contribute here and there and make a bigger success of it."

Church treasurers sometimes resist switching because they say it costs too much, "but they're comparing the cheapest type of coffee with fair trade. And that's not a fair comparison," said Smagge. "Fair trade focuses on high-quality, gourmet coffee, so if you compare it to somewhere like Starbucks, it's a very competitive price." There's also an ethical implication, he said. "People try to save money in other ways but not where there is a clear option to make a difference."

Fair trade coffee is also easy to find. Most suppliers have a website where coffee and other products can be ordered online, or through a toll-free number and delivered to your door. Ten Thousand Villages stores are popping up across the country, and some independent coffee houses will take orders from locals and deliver it within a couple of days. And with more and more grocery chains introducing fair trade coffee on their shelves, it is becoming easier to buy than ever.

Churches can even play a role in motivating grocery stores to carry fair trade products. About 10 years ago, churches in Nova Scotia pressured local stores to offer consumers an alternative. Although spearheaded by the United Church, Rev. Kenneth Stright said Presbyterians were involved. The ecumenical effort resulted in Sobey's introducing a complete line of fair trade coffee from Just Us — an east coast company that distributes fair trade coffee across the country. "We didn't want stores to get rid of their regular brands, but we wanted people to have another option," said Stright. "It's part of our community life in Atlantic Canada, and has been for over 10 years." ■

For more information on fair trade visit:  
TransFair Canada at: [www.transfair.ca](http://www.transfair.ca)  
and Ten Thousand Villages at:  
[www.tenthousandvillages.org](http://www.tenthousandvillages.org)

## African bishops call for fair trade

Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from east and southern Africa, meeting in Nairobi for April's Global Week of Action on Trade, have joined farmers, workers, traders and civil society groups by calling for fair international trade.

"Trade is important in addressing poverty. However, Africa has not reaped its fair entitlement," said Kenyan Anglican Bishop Gideon Ileri, who heads the Anglican Peace and Justice Network in his country.

Most of Kenya's inhabitants earn their livelihood from agriculture. The east African country has led calls for fair trade since dwindling markets for its produce have impoverished large numbers of its citizens. "The poor are not poor because they want it, but because what belongs to them has been taken away," said Ileri, noting that instituting debt relief would help restore what has been taken.

A coalition of international non-governmental organizations and churches in Kenya said the global south earns eight times more each year from trade than it receives in aid, yet its share of world trade continues to fall. The coalition states that Africa accounts for only 2.6 per cent of total world trade, less than half what it was in 1980.

"Because of unfair trading conditions Africans are being squeezed," said Zambian Roman Catholic cleric Telesphore Mpundu. "There should be a level playing field between developed countries and developing countries."

The bishops said although the establishment of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization in 1995 was to be a means of enhancing global prosperity of all its member states, the reality is that the WTO has contributed to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few.

ENI

## WCC urges WTO to promote fair trade

A petition supporting fair trade and signed by more than 180 religious leaders was presented to the World Trade Organization in April by Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary for the World Council of Churches. "We seek a world where global trade systems give priority to people who live in poverty," said Kobia.

The petition urged governments to change international rules and practices that govern trade to give priority to human rights, protection of the environment and the eradication of poverty.

The Geneva-based WTO is an international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations and regions. "The biblical standards for economic activity are justice and taking the side of the poor," said Kobia. "This vision should not be reduced to mere equality of opportunity for all individuals to compete without hindrance."

The presentation was part of a Global Week of Action on Trade, an initiative of civil society, non-governmental organizations and faith communities worldwide during which millions of people in more than 80 countries called for trade justice.

The petition states, "We believe that trade must promote human well-being, sustainable communities and economic justice, and that governments must be able to set trade policies to safeguard the rights of all people, especially those living in poverty."

ENI





# With Thanks to God

We acknowledge receipt of gifts from people who in their Last Will and Testament remembered The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2004. These gifts, totaling \$1,487,126, will continue the work of the Church in the areas of church extension, pensions for ministers and widows, overseas work and the general work of the Church.

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by Mark Lewis

I was in Mexico as part of a delegation to investigate accusations against Metallica Mining Co., a Canadian company operating through its subsidiary Minerala San Xavier. A sign meant for Minerala declared, "Foreigners go home — Traitors to the people — Go home now!" In the tiny village of Cerro de San Pedro (The Hill of Saint Peter), the company's presence has thrust residents into conflict. One-third of the town is in favour of the mine, the other two-thirds are opposed.

Our guide, Martin, has lived in San Pedro his whole life. He recalls the days when the streets were bustling with shopkeepers and gold miners who worked the traditional mine shafts. Only 30 families are left today. Martin was close to weeping when he looked up to his beloved Cerro de San Pedro, and asked why a Canadian company wants to tear the mountain away, leaving a one-kilometer hole in its place and ultimately destroying the village.

Due to the protest work of the locals, Minerala San Xavier has had its mining permits temporarily halted. But the governor has stalled on providing the final signature needed to declare the town a UNESCO historic site, safeguarding it from the mine. The plea of our hosts in Cerro de San Pedro was clear and simple:

"Please let Canadians know what a Canadian company is trying to do here. Tell them what NAFTA has done to our community. Perhaps if Canadians speak up, our mountain and our town will not be destroyed." □

Mark Lewis is minister at McNab Street, Hamilton, Ont., and a former moderator of General Assembly.

For more information, contact KAIROS at 129 St. Clair St. West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1N5 or at rjeremic@kairoscanada.org

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# Christians must fight for fair trade

*Loving Jesus demands a struggle for a fair world economy*

I'm not a poet, not a politician, not an actor, not a student, not an anarchist and don't pick up every fashionable cause that lands within my reach. But I am a Christian. And it is my faith that leads me to have severe reservations about globalization and the lack of fair trade, which seems a likely consequence.

Let me stress, however, that one's position on the issue says nothing about one's particular faith and is no indication of how Christian a person may or may not be. Indifference is surely the only sin in this context, because it is indifference towards one of the most important issues facing the contemporary world.

Nor is this about left and right, labels with which believers are becoming increasingly uncomfortable. Goodness, most of the people who have for generations insisted that small is beautiful have, if anything, been traditionalists and even old style conservatives.

Oddly enough it is members of the conventional left, those who are now so concerned about multilateral agreements, who have long looked to the state, the collective, to solve all of society's problems. They have ignored the family, the community and the individual in the headlong struggle to create their curious utopia. In fact, they have often rejected the very idea of family and community and dismissed it as being reactionary. Strange, then, that they are so surprised when states and corporations become ever more powerful and dictate their own agendas.

It should have been obvious long ago that there is something good and fine about the local and the little. Our own food, our own beer, our own towns, our own customs, our own families. Our own way of life. The contradiction in the left-wing critique of globalization is, as I say, that they have been part of the problem, not part of the solution.

The direct contrary of globalization and universalism is choice and autonomy. The choice, for example, to educate your children how you want to and to think what you want to think. Yet the most vehement opponents of such concepts as educational choice and the right to express unfashionable opinions have been the very people who now lead many of the protests against globalization.

The political right is no better. They tend to believe not that morality should

## The direct contrary of globalization and universalism is choice and autonomy

shape the market but that the market should shape morality. The freer the trade the freer the population. A ridiculous idea when working people's wages are pushed lower and lower and corporations become wealthier than any of us thought possible. Freedom is relative. Or, to put in another way, you aren't free when you and your relatives have to go without health care, education and a decent home.

Yet there are groups of people who have eschewed the left-right dynamic and have, in effect, retreated from society so as to advance civilisation. They have bought small farms where they can raise their families and live an alternative, simple life free from the whims of a new world order allegedly promoted at various free-trade jamborees. They would have little in common with most of the protesters.

Indeed they would argue that the men in the suits and the people with the placards are essentially the two sides of the same coin. Matter and anti-matter, thesis

and antithesis. "It doesn't really concern us which of those two groups has power," explained one home-schooling, self-sufficient friend. "Both of them are committed to imposing the rule of the minority on the majority. They don't seem to be able to see past the bank statement or the political polemic."

There is also something a little suspicious about some of the most vociferous of the critics of globalization. I don't, really don't, wish to appear cynical, but we have surely heard enough from well-heeled lawyers, mediocre novelists and young actresses. They claim that they want to silence the elites and to let the people speak. They then assemble the same old Canadian cultural elite to make the same old noises

As Christians, we can be and should be front and centre in the struggle for a fair world economy and a system of fair trade and fair distribution. For me it is part of being pro-life and part of loving Christ Jesus. If this isn't the case, I seem not to understand my Bible and my faith. **R**

Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).

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# Encountering faith at every turn

*The joys of a Presbyterian summer camp*

by Erin Woods

**T**ime to wake up, girls!”

Muffled groans came from the lumpy sleeping bags that were my cabin mates. Our counsellor wasn't too thrilled about getting up, either, but I was glad to start the day. In the past week, I'd learned how much fun Glen Mhor, a Presbyterian summer camp in Ontario, could be and I wasn't about to spend my last full day in bed.

I jumped down to the floor, earning a glare from the girl in the bunk below mine. I just grinned, knowing her tendency to early-morning grumpiness. We'd become friends in the past few days; while it was my first year at Glen Mhor, she'd been coming for several, so she had showed me the ropes. She was the one who had rescued me when I was too shy to talk to anyone. That's one great thing about camps; there is always someone who won't let you be shy.

I wasn't timid now. After five days, I could climb to the top of the climbing wall, control the ropes at the bottom, perform a proper J-stroke, do a wet exit from a kayak without getting caught in the spray skirt and I could name every one of the 15 other kids my age at the camp, the legacy of a thousand name games our counsellors put us through. I appreciated those games;

they taught us a lot about our peers, providing foundations to build friendships. And those friendships were invaluable in the games we played to build trust, co-operation and leadership.

Among everything that we did, from archery to the zipline (campers clip themselves to a long cable that runs between two tall poles and glide through the air), devotions was my favourite time of day. Sixteen kids and four counsellors — all Presbyterians sitting in a circle talking about God — had a quality of faith that I'd always craved. In other

## When we set the tables, swept the floors or cleaned the firepit we were serving our community

Christian camp settings I'd experienced, the group had been of mixed denominations, which was confusing. Here we were all on the same level, and everything made sense. One very effective activity was a representation of the body of Christ in which we were all given a body part and told to assemble ourselves in order with our eyes closed. Only those playing the eyes could see, and we had to work together to navigate. We managed to run into a parked car, but we learned something about teamwork. I've never had so much fun, and no devotions have ever left such a mark on me. And I'm not just talking about the bruise I got from hitting the car.

Camp life is a different world. Everything you encounter is a metaphor for faith. When I climbed the rock wall, I knew that my own strength would hold me up through the easy parts, but if I slipped on a tough section I had to rely on my harness and the person at the other end of the rope. It's the same thing in life. We can make it through some parts on our own, but we need to trust God to be our safety line when things get rough.

There were other examples: when we helped clean out the woodworking shed, we were doing our part to keep God's

world beautiful. When we organized a campfire for the younger campers we were exercising leadership skills. When we set the tables, swept the floor or cleaned the firepit we were serving the community. And when we lay in the dark in the lower playing field, watching for falling stars and sharing a moment of silent friendship, we were practicing God's most important rule: love.

It was there, in the lower field, that I found myself that last night at camp. The 20 of us were gathered for our last after-dark session when all of the younger campers were in bed. For a while, we watched the stars and then one of our counsellors brought out a long cord. We stood in a circle. It was a tight circle and, at first, I was left on the outside. Someone noticed and everyone inched backward to include me. Suddenly I was part of a ring of people whom I barely knew but with whom I was inexplicably connected. Though the night was cold, I felt warm.

The point of our circle was for someone to take the end of the rope and thank someone in the group for something they'd contributed that week, whether it was a large or a subtle kindness. They would pass the rope to that person and they would do the same for someone else. I chose to thank my friend from the bunk under mine, but I could have said something to anyone there. When we were finished and the cord had become a web that was infused with our love and friendship, our counsellors made everyone a bracelet from it. No one failed to see how precious those bracelets were, and we wore them — wear them still — with a feeling that is almost awe at what they represent. All of the good things from that week are tied up in them.

I treasured my bracelet from the start. And as soon as I finish this article I'm going to go to the Glen Mhor website and fill in the application for this year. **R**

Erin Woods lives in Corbeil, Ont. She has applied to be a leader in training at Glen Mhor this year.

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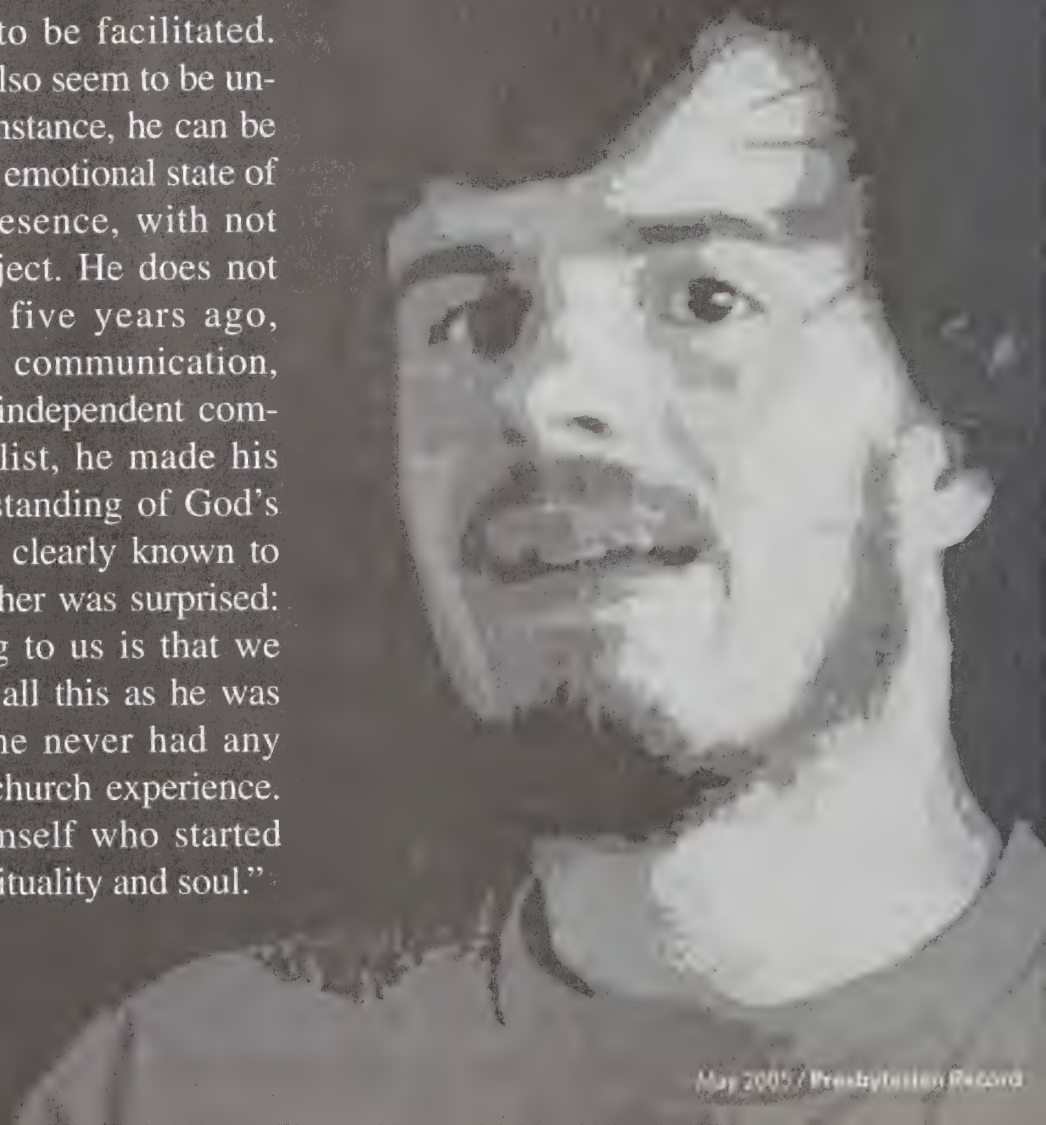


# Loving people is loving God

*An autistic man talks about spirituality*

*by Andrew Foster*

Andrew Bloomfield's hearing and comprehension are acute — it is only the method of communicating that needs to be facilitated. His other faculties also seem to be unusually sharp. For instance, he can be very sensitive to the emotional state of a person in his presence, with not a word on the subject. He does not speak, but about five years ago, through facilitated communication, which involves an independent communication specialist, he made his interest and understanding of God's presence in his life clearly known to his family. His mother was surprised: "What's interesting to us is that we never talked about all this as he was growing up, and he never had any Sunday school or church experience. It was Andrew himself who started using the terms spirituality and soul."



Andrew has lived with severe autism for all his 37 years. It's not hard to find a workable definition of it — most authorities are in broad agreement. Spirituality was another matter, however. The dictionaries were too vague; I tried my own, didn't like it, and then asked some wise friends what they thought it might be. The answers ranged from the scholarly, quoting Augustine, to an enjoyably earthy. In the end, I used Andrew's own definition, because that is what it means to him: "By seeing the miracles all around and counting my blessings, I feel some sense of spirituality in my soul."

When he made his interest known in what we loosely call spirituality, a friend suggested that he might like to visit his local Presbyterian church, Westminster-St Paul's, Guelph, Ont., where he is now an adherent. Not unusual for a person with autism, Andrew likes order and predictability, so when the church began major renovations, he decided to stay away for a while. Calling a minister was a disruption too, so he is waiting for the new minister to arrive before he goes back. His constant companion at church is his golden retriever service dog, Amy. He calls her his "friend maker" because she attracts attention and helps break the ice in a crowd of strangers.

That's the background. The rest of the story is best told in Andrew's own words. The questions were e-mailed to him, and he then typed them and worked on them with his facilitator. This is what he had to say:

**AF:** When did you first become aware of spirituality in your life? Can you remember how old you were?

**AB:** I was a teenager. I felt a sense of awe at times outdoors, in the country. By seeing the miracles all around and counting my blessings, I feel some sense of spirituality in my soul.

**AF:** Did any person or event influence you?

**AB:** I think I am often in the presence of spiritual people, so it rubs off. I know that man did not create the world so it must have been a miracle.

**AF:** What is good and bad about church?

**AB:** I think there are moments of spirituality at church. It is the presence of a spirit like God but not like the God they talk about. It is the atmosphere and the music and the readings and some of the good vibrations from others who are there. Church can be hard for my system with all the noise and busyness. It is hard to feel it with all the people, but I get a sense of spirituality from others. It is good to be in a spiritual place. Prayers sometimes touch me, but sometimes I don't hear them and don't get it. I get it when only one person is speaking or reading. With music, I like instrumental the best. The choir is OK. When everyone sings, it is hard for me, the noise and the standing. I like a good sermon best. The atmosphere is welcoming and safe. I think I feel wanted.

**AF:** What are the people like at the church you go to?

**AB:** I have one or two people who smile and say hello. I need church friends. I think they are kind for the most part. I don't feel they are at all comfortable. I would add that they should come and talk to me.

**AF:** How can the church be better for people with conditions that make communication difficult?

**AB:** I think reaching out and asking what we need. I want church friends who will smile to me and say hello and sit with me sometimes. I could try to stay for the snack at church afterwards. I want to invite some church friends to my home for tea and a board game or a walk, so they understand more about what it's like to be me.

In closing he adds, "In my mind, loving people is loving God. I want to be able to teach but not be a guinea pig. I like to think I can inspire others."

The autistic person is separated from the rest of us only by a communication barrier; a barrier that can be penetrated with the use of patience and imagination. That patience is rewarded by an encounter with an intelligent, compassionate and spiritual person to whom our church has much to offer, and who has much to offer the church. **R**

Andrew Foster is an elder at Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, and is a board member of Guelph Services for the Autistic. He has known Andrew Bloomfield and his family for 15 years.

## Three poems by Andrew Bloomfield:

### What it's like to be me

I'm a bundle of sensations  
I get the urge  
to touch and pick  
and I must follow my urges.  
Can you see my urges?  
I can't tell you  
I just show you.  
I'm a bundle of nerves  
and a jumble of thoughts.  
I'm in constant motion  
and my mind's always going.  
I wonder what it's like to be you.  
Do you wonder what it's like to be me?  
I'm a time bomb waiting to explode  
And a tear waiting to fall.

### Blessing for a Group of Friends

Bless this group of friends  
who want to share with me and with  
each other.  
Make us strong  
and help us to be safe with each other.  
It is a spiritual experience to prepare  
and eat a meal with friends.

### Sense of God

I had in mind that I feel God in my life these days.  
I think God likes our messages and our home.  
I wonder if God sees everything?  
I think God is everywhere and in all of us.



# A modest proposal for our church buildings

*Heritage buildings make good condos; consumer malls make great churches*

by Andrew Faiz

**T**he editorial staff of this magazine, of which I'm a member, occasionally tries to package several stories with a similar theme. But it was only after the April issue had gone to the printers that I realized we had run three stories and the editorial all variously discussing the issue of church and church buildings. There was a news story about Ontario's proposed heritage building law, an interview with Alison Elliot, the Scottish moderator, who argued that old buildings ought to be razed in order to raise spiritual consciousness and an article about a new-wave church that meets in a movie theatre. The editorial admonished the Ontario government's cavalier attitude towards churches that own heritage buildings.

I have a simple solution to the government's hasty dealings: We should sell all of our heritage buildings. As far as I'm concerned they can all be converted to condos, let Alice buy one and turn it into a restaurant, let them be bowling alleys or bingo halls. Most old church buildings continue to house congregations only because of a history of bequests, and even then a good chunk of the budget is wasted on restoring, renovating, maintaining and heating these caverns. The majority of our old church buildings sit in the downtown cores of major cities, on real estate that is worth millions, if not tens and hundreds of millions of dollars. Those bequests are worth another fortune.

Oh yes, of course they are beautiful, and some are even architecturally unique. But most of them in Canada, regardless of their age, are copies of finer examples in Europe. Some have magnificent organs, but, let's be honest, most of our old church buildings are nothing but living museums, their greatest exhibit being a

dusty and fading memory of the energetic congregations they once housed.

Church isn't about tradition, it's about mission. Let's sell these beautiful, soaring old barns, collect the cash, and make certain there is a storefront church in each and every mall in this country. That's right, inside those ugly modern commercial meccas, because malls are the public squares of our time. That's where the people are, and that is where the church should be. Not in some sequestered sanctuary, too precious to be public.

**We weekly raise our voices to the Lord in buildings cloistered from our communities.**

**Let us take our voice into the community — let us be heard by those who need to hear**

We should have a Starbucks policy — let there be a Presbyterian church beside every Starbucks. And a Gap policy — let there be a Presbyterian church beside every Gap store. Let us provide real sanctuary to the weary consumer. Let us be egalitarian. And fraternal. Instead of begging the masses to come to our distant homes, let us go where they go.

Think of the haggard shopper, the lonely senior, the confused adolescent, and the other poor souls who populate our malls, along with you and I. Imagine if there was a place they could go — sit down, and find peace. There in front of them is a five minute film, a meditation with music and images and scripture, which loops constantly. Each day a new meditation, something from the lectionary, and within hailing distance a pastor to lend an ear and give guidance.

And on Sunday morning, and maybe even mid-week, let the congregation attached to that storefront church make a joyful noise inside the deafening den of petty commerce. Let us all dare to be Daniels. We weekly raise our voices to the Lord in buildings cloistered from our communities. Let us take our voice into the community — let us be heard by those who need to hear.

The greatest religion of North America is commerce; there is none other that threatens supremacy. Our religion is an often strangled voice in the buying frenzy of the marketplace. Though it is true that tens of thousands of Christians worship the Lord each Sunday in each village, town and city, it is equally true that hundreds of thousands of others are out shopping, sipping coffees, having brunch.

Each of our heritage buildings speaks a language that, if not dead, is choking. Its location made sense a hundred years ago when it was built — its builders did some sort of market research and decided that's the corner that'll have a grand Presbyterian presence. Its catchment was so defined. Up until — let's say arbitrarily — 1950, the language of that building was well understood. But no more. It no longer speaks tradition, it mutters nostalgia.

Let us not be in love with our traditions just because they are our traditions. Let us question them, reflect upon them. Let us think about their intentions — what was the purpose of this magnificent structure? And how is that purpose best defined today? **R**

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway Community Church in Toronto. You can contact him at [afaiz@presbyterian.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterian.ca).

# Seeking second opinions

*Spiritual growth requires trained encouragement*

by David Webber

**W**e are going to have to get Jim to fell that big Lodgepole Pine tree before it demolishes our house," Linda said in bed over coffee one early morning.

"Huh?" I said intelligently. I was half anesthetized by the view of the rising spring sun massaging the tender green aspen leaves in the grove just outside our bedroom window. She had taken me by surprise as she usually does this early in the morning and it took me a moment to recover and parry her advances. "What on earth do you mean, fell that beautiful large healthy pine? You have been after its hide ever since we settled here 16 years ago and I can't figure for the life of me what you have against it," I was fully aroused now and up for a good argument.

Linda continued to make her case. "Well, the tree is a couple of feet in diameter, at least a 150 feet tall and it's just the right distance from our house and in the right direction, that one of our fierce south winds off the lake could blow it over, smashing our house to bits. And you know where it would land don't you?"

"Ya, ya I know, right over the bedroom and you wouldn't want to lose me to a falling tree. I still can't figure out why you think it would be me that would be taken out and not you. You think I deserve to die more than you do or something? At any rate, I am the resident forester in the family and I have examined that tree very carefully. It is as healthy as a horse. There are no signs of any disease or rot or insect damage. Its foliage is a nice dark green, its structure is sound and it is growing in good solid soil. A good strong healthy tree like that is going to out live me for sure and maybe even you, miss Norwegian longevity." (Linda and I are almost the same age but thanks to her Scandi-



navian genes she looks 15 years younger than I do, something I have yet to forgive her for.)

"Not according to the pileated woodpecker," Linda countered. "He was checking out the pine yesterday and he seems to think it's doing poorly."

"So who are you going to trust, the diagnosis of your extremely well educated forester husband or that dumb red-headed noisy bird-brain who makes his living bashing his brains out against pine trees?" I climbed out of bed and pulled on my Levis and riding boots and strode





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out of the room confident that I had lost yet another early morning round up.

A few days later, Linda silently signalled for me to come from my laptop computer to look out the back door window. She pointed to the healthy pine tree without saying a word. Perched on its side was a large red headed pileated woodpecker (*dryocopus pileatus*). He was hacking at the tree with his big chisel beak like some demented axe-wheedling logger. Great sheets of bark were flying off the pine in all directions exposing the telltale boring channels of the mountain pine beetle in the cambium layer underneath. My extremely healthy pine was deadier than a bag of hammer handles but just didn't know it yet. Apparently neither did I, perhaps because I loved that old pine and desperately didn't want it to change. The pileated woodpecker knew the truth though. Through the senses that only woodpeckers have, the pileated woodpecker had given his second more experienced and objective opinion. He had sensed the mass of maggot-like larvae at work beneath the bark and then he had exposed the whole buggy affair.

I went back to my work with a certain air of depression. I loved that big pine and now it was not only dead but also it would have to be felled. We had precious few trees on our lakefront lot and I knew that Bud, our Labrador retriever and Nuts, the red squirrel, and a whole host of birds who used the tree were going to mourn its loss. Secretly, even Linda was going to miss the grand old pine. Only the pileated woodpecker seemed to be objective about the whole thing. When I went back and checked on him a while later he had pretty much debarked the total tree and in the process had eaten countless little white bark-beetle maggots for his lunch. As I watched, he flew away in his great swooping flight pattern to look for another diagnosis to make in another part of the forest.

Later the same day, I was driving to a house church gathering and I got to thinking about the pileated woodpecker's second opinion and my reluctance to want to listen to it. In most areas of my life I value a second opinion greatly. If I am facing health concerns I don't stop with self diagnose, I get a second

opinion from a doctor, and if it is a serious condition, I want a third opinion too. When it comes to investing money I don't do it based upon my own opinion, I get the second opinion of an investment counsellor. If I am going through a tough time emotionally, I have learned to seek counsel beyond my own. I have become pretty good at seeking a second opinion in almost every area of my life except two. One of those areas happens to be forestry where I like to feel I am some kind of an expert, the other area is my soul, my inner spiritual being. I can understand that pride is the stumbling block when it comes to seeking a second opinion over something to do with trees, but what is the stumbling block when it

**If your soul has gone flat,  
if your spiritual journey has  
become one mundane song,  
if the timber of your inner life  
seems to be under attack,  
seek a second opinion**

comes to seeking a second opinion concerning the timber of my life, my soul, my spiritual being?

In the Christian faith, seeking or providing a second opinion for the soul is called spiritual direction. I know I am not alone in having a problem with seeking spiritual direction because in over 22 years of being a pastor whose job description includes providing spiritual direction, whose education includes special training in spiritual direction, I can count on one hand the number of times I have been sought out to be someone's spiritual director. I have been sought out many times to be counsellor, therapist, confessor, teacher, mediator, admonisher and encourager but hardly ever to be a spiritual director. It could be that people just don't see me as being the spiritual director type or being their particular spiritual director. But I suspect that it is more than likely that most Christians, particularly Protestant Christians, don't want to seek a second opinion concerning their spiritual being. Unfortunately, for whatever reason, with regards to the

inner life of the soul, we seem to become blissfully satisfied with mediocrity.

Eugene Peterson writes in *Finding a Spiritual Director* about his personal experience in becoming aware that he needed to seek one. He compared it to playing the banjo where as a self taught banjo picker he rose to a certain level of expertise and was very pleased and satisfied for a time. Eventually though he never seemed to go beyond that level of playing and over time he became bored, and bored others to tears with his playing. The same old banjo licks just weren't enough anymore and so he lost interest. Had he sought a second opinion, had he sought another more experienced banjo picker to jam with, why there is no telling to what heights he could have gone. That's what a spiritual director's role is in the Christian's life. The spiritual director is not a counsellor, therapist, confessor, teacher, mediator or admonisher. He or she is a trusted fellow Christian with more maturity and experience in the spiritual walk than I have and with whom I can meet regularly for spiritual "jam sessions" to encourage me to keep making intentional progress in my spiritual journey.

Throughout Christian history spiritual direction has been an important and special ministry. It is only in recent times that it has become a lost art and a seldom-sought service. Peterson warns, "It strikes me that it is not wise to treat lightly what most generations of Christians have agreed is essential."

If your soul life has gone flat, if your spiritual journey has become one mundane song, if the timber of your inner life seems to be under attack, seek a second opinion. Seek out a spiritual director. If you are interested in learning more about spiritual direction, visit your local Christian bookstore. Here are three of my favorite authors on the subject, from a healthy wide range of Christian traditions: Eugene H. Peterson (Presbyterian), Richard Foster (Quaker) and Henri J. M. Nouwen (Roman Catholic). **R**

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

## Returning smiles

Photo: Emily Will, Mennonite Central Committee



**Fivie, a volunteer with YAKKUM Emergency Unit, plays with a child displaced by the tsunami in Indonesia.**

Within 72 hours of the December 26 tsunami, Action by Churches Together (ACT) member Yakkum Emergency Unit began providing medical care for people in Banda Aceh. Two months later, team members — a collection of medical professionals from different parts of Indonesia — are still providing medical care at camps for people who have been internally displaced. The focus has now shifted from emergency medicine to routine health care, prevention, education and community development. The team based in Banda Aceh is responsible for the health and water and sanitation needs of 2,350 individuals dispersed in 21 camps within an hour's drive of the city. They are caring for the infirm and elderly, checking the quality of water sources and caring for babies and mothers. In addition they have constructed 32 latrines, 29 washrooms, eight water tanks and one well. Also important is the care they are providing to help people recover from the psychological scars left by the tsunami. The team's happy spirit infects others, injecting a dose of cheer into saddened lives. Sometimes that's the best medicine around.

PWS&D is supporting YAKKUM, a Christian foundation for public health established by Indonesian churches, though Action by Churches Together.

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# Where do ministers come from?

*Some thoughts on models of theological education*

by Clyde Ervine

Many congregation members often wonder, and worry about what goes on in theological colleges. Where do ministers come from? What do they learn? Why do they have to go to Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal for at least three years? I hope I will provide some answers by providing a brief history of theological education, to which I have added some proposals.

There have been three basic models that have shaped the history of theological education. First, there is the classical model. Here, a theological college trained candidates for denominational ministry in a residential community, where everyone lived together as a Christian fraternity, under the watchful eye of a resident college principal. The whole range of theological subjects was studied, but the emphasis lay with the Bible and preaching. Central to this model was the development of Christian character and confessional identity in future denominational ministers. At Presbyterian College, Montreal, our Victorian-era students endured a discipline of morning and evening prayers, awakened by a 6:45 a.m. bell, with lights out at 11. By the early years of the 20th century, this model was in trouble in mainline denominations, suspected for its lack of intellectual rigor, its theological rigidity, and its pietistic overtones.

The classical model gave way to a German graduate school model in the early decades of the 20th century. Here, theological education was promoted as best located in a university, or university-related graduate school. Theological education, it was argued, was undertaken not so much as a means to holiness, or as training for denominational ministry, as much as it was to promote theological



Photo by Jason Miles Vanderhill

learning as an intellectual discipline. Investigation and advancement of knowledge was the thing — academic freedom to pursue scholarship, free from ecclesiastical control. This model was still interested in preparing ministers, but ministers who would be well-educated, professional leaders for one of society's most important professions. The status of such ministers would be enhanced through the raising of academic standards in graduate theological schools, that in intellectual methodology, achievement, and prestige, would rival the university law and medical schools.

In the years after the 1925 Church Union, the Presbyterians who opposed church union through an appeal to Presbyterianism's confessional character, did not promote the development of the graduate school model within Presbyterian theological colleges. Professor, later principal, Walter Bryden, attempted to construct a theological education at Knox College that was confessionally faithful, but at the same time open to modern theological movements. When Presbyterian College was invited to join a proposed Faculty of Divinity at McGill University in the 1940s, the idea was

stoutly and successfully opposed by a union of evangelicals led by W. Stanford Reid, and by a group whom Reid's biographer Donald MacLeod calls, "the Bryden Barthians," it was a debate over models. Reid and his associates sought to retrieve and retain the older model of the seminary as a place of spiritual and vocational training in which the Bible, Westminster Confession of Faith and preaching would be central. What they opposed was the university-related, graduate school model to be embodied at McGill, which one Presbyterian critic, Arthur Cochrane, dismissed as a "non-ecclesiastical secular theological faculty".

As the years have passed, criticism of the graduate school model has grown. Some, like Edward Farley, believe this model promoted academic knowledge and neglected other ways of knowing. Theology, writes Farley, certainly involves disciplined study. But theology, he argued, is about God and faith in God, faith understood as a disposition of the soul, which produces its own kind of wisdom. But theological education, situated in the university and in seminaries that have followed the academic fashion, he says, has abandoned theology as both spiritual and intellectual wisdom. The model has also been criticized by the liberation theologians of Latin America who find Western academic theology far too removed from the global social injustice which the church must address.

There has been criticism from preachers and pietists who were more interested in souls than scholarship. Rev. J.W. L. McLean of St. Andrew's, Victoria, BC, was surely speaking for many working ministers when in 1960 he complained that Knox College was preparing theologians rather than preachers, and that what students for the ministry needed was "an emphasis upon necessary spiritual resources comparable to the present emphasis upon mental equipment".

Among North American church leaders of the 1960s, there was also growing concern that graduate school theology seemed irrelevant to the practice of ministry in congregations now facing a social revolution. Charles Fielding voiced these concerns when he complained that there was too great an emphasis on the past in theological education. It was time, he

wrote, for theological education "to stop hiding its light under a bushel of biblical or theological archaism".

Fielding proposed a third model, which he called "professional". The assumptions behind the model include these: that ministers are professionals among professionals, that the theological curriculum needs to be shaped by the realities of ministerial practice, that theological education, while still based on acquiring knowledge from the full academic range of theological studies, is primarily concerned with producing professional church leaders, and that educational standards, pastoral competency, and personal growth need to be measured. How were such standards, competency and growth to be measured? Not by a traditional diet of lectures and exams,

### **Theological education is about thought, as well as engagement with everything past and present that challenges the Christian faith**

but by new initiatives that included clinical pastoral education, supervised field placements, action/reflection exercises, and case-study methods.

There are obvious strengths to the professional model. It encourages significant integration in theological education where "knowing" is not only intellectual knowing, but also the knowing that comes from "doing", and the knowing that comes from what Farley referred to as "the disposition of the soul". Nevertheless, the professional model has also come under widespread criticism. Feminist theologians want more attention given in theological education to character development and social justice. They are also concerned that the model's concentration on clergy encourages a hierarchical understanding of ministry where clergy, with their theological education, might still dominate a non-theologically-educated laity. More recently, Robert Banks has suggested that the mission of the church ought to shape theological education, not professional competency. What is most relevant for the church at the beginning of the 21st century is not

the competency of an elite clergy group, but the training of a broader leadership for a missional church.

Where does all this leave theological education in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2005? Debates rage. Some want the seminary to be about Christian character formation, some about scholarship, and others, about professional competency. It is, I think, true to say that the Vancouver School of Theology, in which the Presbyterian church is a partner, has implemented the most thorough-going professional model. In Montreal, Presbyterian College finally joined McGill's Faculty of Divinity in 1969, choosing to adopt the graduate school model in place at McGill, but combining it with a professional ministry year at the College. Professor Joseph McLelland wrote an article for the February 1970 *Presbyterian Record* promoting this hybrid model, arguing that "theology tends to become subjective, parochial and pietistic" without the outside academic critique that university theologians offer to the church. At Knox College, curriculum change has been arguably the most cautious, though a new master of divinity curriculum is now being implemented. Each of the three models has something valuable to offer. The difficult issue is to find an integrated model that might combine the strengths of each. Let me suggest some proposals.

#### **1. Theological education is about God.**

But how do we know God? For churches in the Reformed tradition, the fundamental answer is that only God can reveal God. Central to the Reformed faith, and central in earlier Reformed theological education has been the doctrine of revelation. This needs to remain as the central unifying force in theological education. Theology is about God, God revealed in the Incarnate Word, God's Incarnate Word witnessed to in the written Word, and God's Incarnate Word, known through the written Word, being witnessed to by the proclaimed Word. This provides a shape to theological education that will be familiar to Presbyterians. It means that theological education is rooted both in a subject, God, and a task, making that God known. Theology has a Word that precedes witness to the





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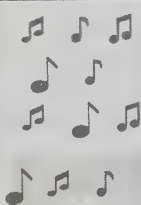
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Word; it has a content that needs to be explored before it is communicated. This will save theological education from being made captive to only that which happens to be considered relevant to the church's contemporary mission.

**2. Theological education is about developing theological minds.** It is about spiritual formation; it is about ministerial skills; it is about the transmission of the Christian tradition. But it is more than any and all of these together. Theological education cannot be reduced to denominational distinctives, the formation of piety, or skills for ministry. Theological education is about thought, about engagement with the sources of the Christian faith, as well as engagement with everything past and present that challenges the Christian faith. It is about nurturing the ability to think theologically, and nurturing leaders who have been educated not just to fulfill a number of ministerial tasks, but able, as Jackson Carroll puts it, "to bring to bear their own knowledge of God and the wisdom of the Christian tradition on the issues at hand".

**3. Theological education is an integrated whole.** To know, in biblical thought, is about a knowing that comes through relationships. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge". Knowledge of God is not a detached, objective knowing. It is a personal knowing that involves response. The implications of this view of knowing are profound for theological education. It means students need to know God in a relational way, and that that relational knowledge be expressed in worshipful response. Accordingly, the college chapel as well as the college classroom are equally locations for theological education. It means that students need to think about the meaning of their faith commitment and that the knowledge of the heart and the knowledge of the head must be integrated. But further, there is a knowing, as I noted earlier, that comes from doing. Believers know God not just through worship or contemplation, but through obedience in the world. This emphasis on doing is a strength of the professional model. Thus theological education is not confined to the college chapel or classroom, but takes



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| <b>June 29</b>   | <i>Hannah's Song of Gratitude</i><br>Karla Wübbenhorst, Lecturer in Christian Theology<br>Presbyterian College, Montreal, PQ                              | I Samuel 2.1-10       |
| <b>July 6</b>    | <i>John's Song of Incarnation</i><br>Donald Carson, Research Professor of New Testament<br>Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL             | John 1.1-18           |
| <b>July 13</b>   | <i>Paul's Song of Love</i><br>Dennis Ngien, Research Professor of Theology<br>Tyndale Theological Seminary, Toronto, ON                                   | I Corinthians 13.1-13 |
| <b>July 20</b>   | <i>Mary's Song of Praise</i><br>Nelson Annan, Senior Pastor<br>Bayview Glen Missionary Alliance Church, Toronto, ON                                       | Luke 1.46-55          |
| <b>July 27</b>   | <i>A Song of Assurance</i><br>Clyde Irvine, Director of Pastoral Studies<br>Presbyterian College, Montreal, PQ  | II Timothy 2.11-13    |
| <b>August 3</b>  | <i>A Song of Supremacy</i><br>Victor Shepherd, Professor of Systematic Theology<br>Tyndale Theological Seminary, Toronto, ON                              | Colossians 1.15-20    |
| <b>August 10</b> | <i>A Song of Pre-eminence</i><br>Kevin Livingston, Senior Minister<br>Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, ON   | Hebrews 1.1-3         |
| <b>August 17</b> | <i>A Song of Humiliation and Exaltation</i><br>Philip Ryken, Senior Minister<br>Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA                               | Philippians 2.5-11    |
| <b>August 24</b> | <i>Songs of Praise in Heaven</i><br>Glen Soderholm, Presbyterian Pastor and Musician<br>Moveable Feast Resources, Rockwood, ON                            | Revelation 5          |

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place out in the church and community, where students get to try out what they have been learning in the classroom, but more profoundly, where theological convictions are tested and deepened. As the old saying goes, we learn by what we hear, by what we see, but most of all, by what we do.

In a more integrated theological curriculum, there might be a course on suffering and evil that integrated a study of Job with various philosophical and theological treatments of these themes, combining this with reflection on appropriate pastoral care; or a course on church and ministry that integrated a study of Ephesians and the pastoral epistles with reflection on the church by patristic, Reformation and contemporary writers, combining this with the students' reflection on their own practice of church ministry. We need a creative curriculum that promotes theological integration such that spiritual formation, pastoral formation and ministerial skills are understood not as additions to or applications of theology, but part of the study of theology itself.

**4. Theological education is a discipline in the church, of the church, and for the church.** It is true that theology can be studied in other locations than in church seminaries. Joseph McLelland notes the critical role that university theology can play in providing a critique of the church from outside the church. Nevertheless, theological education of church leaders is a ministry of the church, for the church, located within the church. Only in this context can a biblical doctrine of revelation be acknowledged. And only in this context can a theological education be integrated as proposed above. I have no desire to isolate theological education from the wider world of scholarship. An ongoing dialogue needs to be in place, and is in place in the scholarly guilds, between university theologians and church theologians. I am aware, however, that in Canada in 2005, theological education as I have construed it, is not a discipline that will be acceptable to the canons of the secular university, no matter how empathetic individual university theologians may be towards the Christian faith.

**5. Theological education is continuous with Christian education and Christian ministry.** All Christians are called to ministry and need to have their capacity for ministry nurtured. There is, therefore, no need to restrict theological education to those who will be ordained as ministers. But having said that, the church does need a core of competent, ordained leaders to be ministers of Word and Sacrament. The latter should emerge as the product of ongoing Christian education and Christian ministry. That means that those whom presbyteries accept as candidates for ordained ministry ought to have received a grounding in the Christian faith and be active in Christian ministry before they enter the seminary. I suggest a home-based Probationary Year for all such. In this Year, probationers would be active in the ministry of their home congregation, have a mentored relationship with their home pastor, take a Bible reading course that would insure basic biblical literacy, take the Psychological Testing already set by General Assembly, and spend two weeks at a Residential School which would combine the current work of the Guidance Conference with an orientation to theological education as an integration of head, hands and heart. At the end of this, school probationers would receive full evaluation and either be recommended to their presbyteries as candidates for ordained ministry or not.

One final thought: Theological education should be a sustained experience of theological, pastoral, and spiritual formation in and through community. Vital to that experience will be a theological faculty that models what theological education for mission is, as they lead the community in theological reflection, and as they lead in the active mission of the church.

There is no perfect model for theological education, none that will meet all desires. However, I trust this article will spark debate, and response. **R**

W. J. Clyde Ervine is director of Pastoral Studies at Presbyterian College, Montreal.

Check the Year of Education website at [www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education](http://www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education) for updates of ideas, resources and events.

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# Guys talk about God

*Having good friends is better than being smart*

**I**t seemed like a bad idea at the time. But a friend was listening and sipping coffee, so I thought I'd give it a try. "Hey," I said, past a mouthful of muffin, "how about we get some guys together a few times a month for a reading group. We'll discuss something serious like Plato...or Archie comic books. We can meet at my house."

The idea was met with a stifled yawn. "Phil," said my friend, "I'm busier than a wasp at a barbecue. Besides, a reading club sounds about as exciting as watching cheese moult."

"Well," I stammered, "how about we...uh...how about we get together and just eat. Ya, that's it. An Eating Club. We'll sample desserts, then have a lively discussion to burn off the calories."

"Now you're talking," said my friend, squeezing the creamer way too hard. "Sorry about that...here's a napkin."

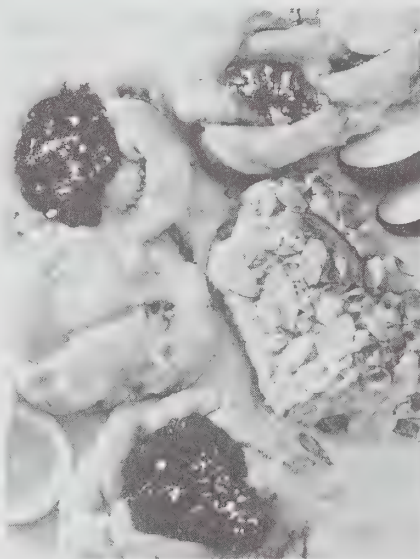
It's been four years since I cleaned that shirt. Four years since the Circle of Six began convening almost every other Tuesday. For reasons of international security, I can't say much, but I will tell you that each member has agreed to adhere to some strict guidelines as laid out in our red Principles and Procedures notebook:

**Rule #1:** Be there at 8:30 p.m. Unless you're late.

**Rule #2:** Hosts will be selected in alphabetic sequence. If you are hosting the event, bake something. We reserve the right to watch you eat it first. If you choke, lose consciousness, or die, we will try to revive you. We will not, however, eat your baking.

**Rule #3:** If you bring a cell phone, we will take it apart and hide the pieces.

**Rule #4:** No talking about Amway or Mannatech. Unless you have a really good story about someone who sells it.



**Rule #5:** The food must be better than last time we were at your house. If this means your wife bakes it, that's okay. No, your wife may not attend the meeting.

**Rule #6:** When we run out of food and things to say, the assembly is adjourned.

I'm realizing lately that the next best thing to being smart yourself is to hang out with people who are. When I think of real guys, I think of Vance, Ron, Harold, Hunter and Dan. And I think of the following characteristics:

**Graceful.** You should see these guys swoop down on a dessert. Such speed, grace and elegance is seldom glimpsed outside ballet halls. But they are also full of grace when it comes to conversation. This is not Gossip 101. This is Sinners Anonymous. Overwhelmed by God's grace, we are looking for ways to pass it on.

**Understanding.** Though we have come frighteningly close to tears on two occasions, if you come here looking for hugs and sensitivity, you may be disappointed. But if you're looking for some

timely advice, or a listening ear it's great to be surrounded by a few wise guys.

**Yielded.** We sometimes disagree on child-rearing or music or automobile brands. But we share one thing in common. Each of us has handed the steering wheel over to God. Yes, we sometimes want to take it back, or offer suggestions on how to drive. But we're learning. Together.

**Successful.** Tonight we got to talking about Stuff we wish we had. About riding mowers, and power sprayers, and hot tubs. Then we laughed. Though it's easy to forget, success is not defined by the stuff we grab, but by the footprints we leave. Our incomes don't define success. Our legacy does.

It was slow going at first. Guys aren't always comfortable talking about what's really happening in our lives. We hide behind the weather and the Toronto Blue Jays. But before long someone removes his catcher's mask and admits that he's just an old sinner in need of God's grace. And before you know it the clock strikes midnight and you're all sitting around wishing it hadn't.

Tonight we talk about a friend's failed marriage and what it takes to keep the flame burning. After we say goodnight, I sit on the sofa wishing that every guy on earth had this many friends. Guys who love to laugh. Guys who know that burdens are lighter and the path a whole lot brighter when travelled with a few fat friends.

Now, it's time to clean candle wax off my wife's tablecloth. And, oh yes, I need to do something with this last piece of cheesecake. **R**

Phil Callaway is a bestselling author and popular speaker. His idea of a guys' group has spawned three franchises. Visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

# Following in Jesus' footsteps

*Native ministry an integral part to Winnipeg presbytery's purpose*

by Amy MacLachlan

What sets the Presbytery of Winnipeg apart from others is the high proportion of resources it devotes to aboriginal ministry. The presbytery of 12 charges supports three aboriginal outreach centres: Flora House and Anishinabe (both in Winnipeg), and Anamiewigummig located farther north in Kenora, Ont. Together, they receive almost 30 per cent of the presbytery's budget and require the most resources — both financial and human. "Our purpose is to meet the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the people in our area," said Warren Whittaker, director of Flora House. "We try to follow Jesus' model in Luke — to bring liberty to the captive and sight to the blind."

Flora House and Anishinabe are sister missions supported by Presbyterians Sharing. Although talking about faith isn't a distinct part of daily activities, Christ is part of the mix. Sundays at Anishinabe offer a worship service that draws about 70 adults and 40 children. It's so popular that the centre often closes its doors because the room is filled to capacity.

Originally a place for people to stay when they first came to the city, the centre now caters to the inner-city community, with a drop-in program attracting mainly 30 to 50 year olds. People can hang out and have coffee, or take advantage of other services including monthly food packages, blankets and towels, a computer lab, a children's after-school program and counselling. About 85 to 100 people drop in each day. Relationships formed at the centre help build trust between the Native community and the church. "We feel like it's a God-directed thing," said outreach worker, Susan



Photo courtesy of Flora House

**Flora House in Winnipeg offers after-school programs so that children have a safe place to go until their parents come home from work.**

Currie. "Healing has to take place, and they trust us. It feels like home here."

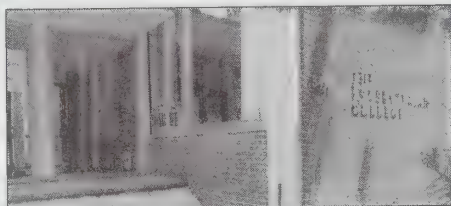
Established in 1962, Flora's primary focus is on youth and children's ministry. An after school program for 30 children runs five days a week and focuses on teaching skills in recreation, fine arts and academics. A nurse is on hand once a week, a teen program operates weekly, and the centre is open for casual drop-

ins. Not including the 90 adults who pass through the food bank twice monthly, Flora House welcomes about 50 people through its doors every day. "As a church, we have to be involved in outreach — not only overseas, but in our own cities," said Whittaker, who has worked at Flora House for 26 years. "We have to be ambassadors of the church and bring people the gospel."





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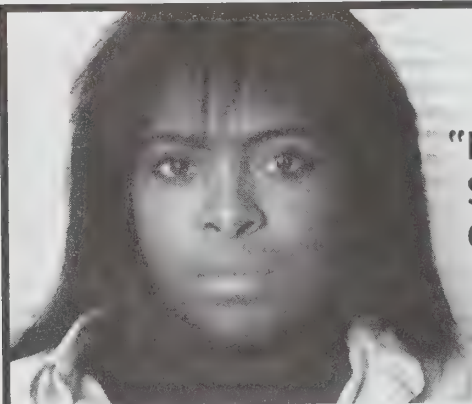
The presbytery's devotion to original projects includes its maintenance of Kildonan Cemetery in Winnipeg, dating from 1851. In its soil are the graves of Scottish settlers to Manitoba, including William Ross, who ran the area's first post office. Rev. James Robertson is also laid to rest there. Robertson was the first Presbyterian superintendent of missions in 1881. Based in Winnipeg, where settlement was increasing with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway, he supervised regional development, visited mission stations and distributed funding to prairie missions. In 1874, Robertson was called to Knox Church (now Knox United). During his seven year stay, the 70-member church grew to 400. The presbytery adopted the cemetery when the local congregation that originally laid claim could no longer meet the rising expenses. At nearly 14 per cent, the upkeep is now one of the most significant items in the budget.

Although most of the presbytery's charges are in or near Winnipeg, the boundaries stretch far to the north and east, including St. Andrew's, Thompson, which lies eight hours north of the city, First, Kenora, actually located two hours past the border into Ontario, and Pinawa Christian Fellowship, on the shores of the Winnipeg River and two hours north east of the city.

Pinawa itself has a unique story to tell as it consists of Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian and United Church members. It incorporates all four traditions in its worship services, creating a unique community.

Founded in 1963, the church has never had its own church building, but has rented office, educational and worship space as needed. The decision releases the congregation and its minister, Rev. Robert Murray, from the frustrations of maintaining a building. Money saved goes to paying the minister, maintaining denominational ties and outreach.

Although churches in remote areas of the province may struggle to maintain membership, there is hope for growth. Prospects lie in the southwest corner of Winnipeg, where plans are underway to establish a new church to meet the area's growing population. **R**



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# Feeling the cause

*Church shares its fortunes*

by Amy MacLachlan

**A**midst the tall trees and tranquil shores of Georgian Bay in Penetanguishene, Ont., members of First Church are counting their blessings — and extending those blessings to others. Thanks to a friendship between the church's minister, Dr. Gerard Booy, and missionaries in Mozambique, the congregation is helping build a classroom for students in the small village of Gurué in northwestern Mozambique. "Living in Canada, we're fortunate," said Mary Sheriff, chair of the missions team that coordinated the project, "but do we realize it? This was a chance to get to know each other more, and our community more, and to learn about others living elsewhere."

Seventy per cent of Mozambique's population lives below the poverty line, making it one of the poorest countries in the world. With the literacy rate sitting at about 48 per cent, education is of paramount importance. Through letters and conversations with Anthonie and Elsabé Welman, Dutch Reformed missionaries working in Mozambique since 1996, the congregation decided to launch Mozambique Day on Sept. 25, with proceeds going towards building and supplying a classroom. "It generated real excitement," said Sheriff. "Whenever we asked for help, people just came forward."

Booy went to theological college with Anthonie Welman in South Africa, and later they were ministers in neighbouring congregations. Since Booy came to Canada about four years ago, he has shared his stories of Africa with the con-



**Three students from Chabwe School in Mozambique stand in front of their new blackboard — made possible through fundraising at First Church, Penetanguishene, Ont. The small rural school was in desperate need of supplies and renovations.**

gregation. It was only a matter of time before he spurred people to action. They chose to help Chabwe School, with nearly 100 grade 1 and 2 children and only one teacher. Desks, chairs and a blackboard were badly needed items — as was a well-constructed classroom that could keep students dry in the rain. "The congregation really embraced the idea," said Booy. "There was huge enthusiasm right from the start."

A silent auction, musical entertainment, a barbeque, face-painting and a fish pond for the kids and video presentations on Mozambique were all on tap for the day. The relatively small congregation

hoped it could raise about \$1,000 for the cause, but thanks to the generosity of church and community members (which together totalled about 250), the event brought in five times that amount. "We realized how talented we are and how fortunate for having the membership and leadership that we do," said Sheriff. "You often don't feel a part of the cause you're giving to, but with this, we did. You saw that happening all day, with the smiles, the conversation, and the absolute shock when we counted the money!"

The event also featured displays of each congregation member in order to facilitate the getting-to-know-each-other-

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**To celebrate their 100-year anniversary, the women and men of Grace Church, Calgary, set out to make 100 quilts, one for each year of the church. Quilts — which totaled 120 in all — were donated to several of the church's mission sites.**

better process. Little-known facts are now segues into conversation. Instead of rushing home after church, members linger to talk with each other. "The \$5,000 was just a bonus," said Sheriff.

The church has received thank you letters from the children they helped, and receive updates from the Welmans on the school's progress. The missions committee will decide what to raise money for next depending upon the reports. "Everybody did such a wonderful job," said Sheriff. "It certainly was a team effort. It brought out enthusiasm we didn't even know was there!"

"One of the great things to come out of this is the awareness of the situation," said Booy. "Coming out of Africa and having seen the poverty and how many people don't have the opportunities we have, raising awareness of that was a big thing. It also brought people together, and there was very definite spiritual growth."

Celebrating spiritual growth and serving the community are two things Grace Church, Calgary, are in the midst of. The congregation is commemorating 100 years with celebrations lasting for 100 days from February to May. The plans have been more than two years in the making. "The anniversary steering committee reflected on what we could do if we had no restrictions on money, manpower, or where God will take us," said Bob Ernter, chair of the committee. "For the next three meetings, we accumulated

ideas and created a bold venture — there were no limitations on anything."

Their ambitious plans paid off when they booked the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra for a February concert. The orchestra's conductor was so pleased with the church's own musical talent, that she invited the choir and six of Grace's soloists to take part. Nearly 900 spectators packed the church. Not forgetting about Grace's younger crowd, the church also hosted a Christian rock concert that attracted 200 youth on a Saturday night, some of whom led a youth service the next morning.

Such high-profile events aren't the only things going on at Grace. The congregation is also commemorating years of mission work and outreach. They have a total of 24 projects on the go. One of them saw 56 members leave for Tijuana, Mexico. Travelling by bus, they built

three homes for needy families, complete with water purification systems.

The congregation also operates a service to shut-ins, where volunteers pick them up for church, head to their homes to talk, or take them to appointments. Volunteers continue to help the Mustard Seed Street Ministry, through which they have served 72,000 meals to those in need. The project has operated every month for 13 years. Grace also hosts an Inn from the Cold program, where homeless individuals can find a warm bed for the night, a breakfast in the morning, and a brown-bag lunch.

To further reach out to those in need, Grace's women have knitted 120 quilts to distribute in Mexico and to local women's shelters. The congregation also operates Grace House — a safe place for young women who are in the Servant's Anonymous rehabilitation program (designed to help women involved in prostitution or victims of sexual exploitation).

Other special events include Bring a Friend to Church, where every member is encouraged to bring someone along for every week in the celebration, and Guess Who's Coming for Supper, where members take turns hosting and attending dinners or lunches at each other's homes. The festivities also feature a women's fellowship weekend, a youth sleepover, a family night, a centennial hall of history, a 100-day prayer book created by two congregation members, a master class of music, a potluck attended in period costumes and a grand banquet in May to culminate the celebration.

"This has caused and created excitement in our church," said Ernter. "We're helping wherever we can in our community." ■

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# We do not lose heart

*A friend remembers two sudden shocks*

by J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg

*We have this treasure in clay pots...*  
2 Corinthians 4:1, 7-16a

It's hard to believe that I first heard an exposition of this passage of scripture almost 40 years ago by Rev. Dr. John Stott, then the minister of All Souls Anglican Church, in London, England. I was at the 1965 Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship Missions Conference at Urbana University, in Illinois, Indiana. I was a mere youth then, a student graduating from high school, working with the young people in our vibrant church, and considering a vocation to teach English literature at a university level. My experience in attending Urbana contributed to my consideration of a calling of the Lord into the Christian ministry. What I still remember from John Stott's remarks was his frequent repetition of the biblical phrase: "we do not lose heart." In spite of the hassles, hurdles and hurts we may face in life, or in ministry, "we do not lose heart."

There have been many times since when I have had cause to consider the challenge and comfort of this amazingly grace-filled passage of scripture.

As I think about this passage again, after 33 years of ministry, I want to share something of the grief which I and many continue to feel over the recent and untimely deaths of two of our colleagues in ministry, one a graduate from Knox College, in Toronto, and the other, a graduate from the Vancouver School of Theology. My ministry intersected with their ministries, so I must tell you, I feel this grief personally. I want to lift up again, for a moment, the memory of Rev. Jang Woo

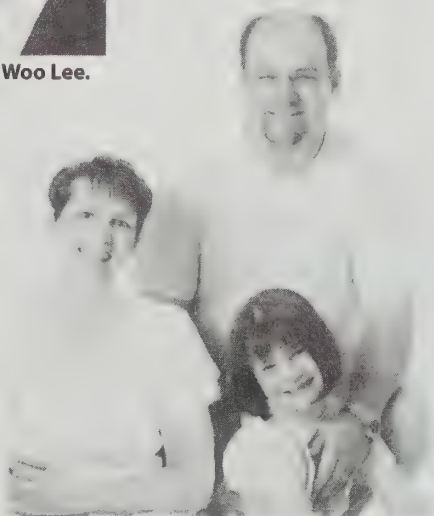
Lee, who died of a sudden onset of lung cancer on November 26 in Winnipeg, at age 44; and, of Rev. Kris Davidson, who died along with his wife Sheryl and their nine year old daughter Laren, in a collision with a truck on an icy stretch just west of Salmon Arm on January 7.

Jang Woo was ordained in 1994 and served Korean Presbyterian congregations in Oshawa, Ont., Abbotsford, B.C., and for a few months in Winnipeg. He was a passionate, charismatic leader and church builder; he was a faithful pastor and a good friend. The Abbotsford Korean Presbyterian Church began its life in our building at Calvin Church from June 1998 to June 2002. Eventually, the congregation grew so well they needed to move to larger facilities elsewhere in the city.

Jang Woo taught me how to enjoy Korean food; I liked everything except Kim Chee. We went out for lunch at least once every month. He



Rev. Jang Woo Lee.



Rev. Kris Davidson, his wife Sheryl and their 9 year old daughter, Lauren.

kindly called me his "elder brother". When he moved to Winnipeg in the summer of 2004 I missed him. When I heard of his cancer, only months later, I was shaken. I, along with many others, still grieve his loss. He is survived by his delightful, appropriately-named wife, Sunny, and his boys, John, 14 and Joshua, 11.

Kris Davidson was ordained in March, 2004 and served Haney Presbyterian for just nine months. He and his family were returning from Calgary after Christmas to a congregation where he fitted in beautifully. He was a gentle, godly, thoughtful, well-read preacher and pastor. He became a Christian in Southwood United Church in Calgary in 1993, and during his course of study at VST decided to throw his lot in with the PCC. His ministry was full of promise.

His death, along with his wife's and daughter's, shocked everyone in the congregation and communities in which they lived and worked, as well as all of us in the Presbytery of Westminister.

Again, we were severely shaken. They were survived by Katie, their two year old daughter, who herself was diagnosed with serious heart enlargement (possibly requiring a transplant) just weeks after Kris was inducted into his charge at Haney.

We who are left behind are "survivors" and we who are left behind are left with great sadness, many troubled questions, and some anger at the immense loss. We are "survivors" because we've been on beaches like the beaches of Sumatra or Thailand or Sri Lanka, and we have not been swept away. We are "survivors" because some of us, too, have been diagnosed with cancer; but we, unlike Jang Woo Lee, have had successful



treatment and now the prognosis is good. We are survivors because some of us have travelled icy roads like the Davids and found ourselves slipping and sliding, even ending upside down in a ditch inside our car; but, fortunately, we were able to crawl out and get help.

In situations like Jang Woo's, Kris', Sheryl's and Lauren's — and others similar to theirs — I am struck, as the apostle Paul was struck, with our common humanity, our common human frailty. Not one of us is immune from accident, disease or sudden natural disaster. Not even believers — of various kinds — not even Christian ministers of the gospel. We are all cracked, clay pots; we are all prone to being "swept away".

So we are conscious, as Paul was, that "while we live we are always being given up to death" (2 Cor. 4:11a). And the common tendency, unless you like doing this kind of thing, is occasionally, no doubt, to be tempted to "lose heart" (2 Cor. 4:1b, 16a) because it's human to do so.

As Christians, we choose to live our lives in the context of the life and death

and resurrection of Jesus. "While we live we are always being given up to death", but it is, "for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:10a). We live and even die, for a purpose — echoing, emulating, incarnating, serving Jesus; we do it "so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh". (2 Cor. 4:10). As Christians, we choose to live our lives in the context of the cross — "the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land" — and of the resurrection, because we hope and pray, and believe "that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with [others] into his presence" (2 Cor. 4:14).

If it were not for the words of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the suffering of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus, I don't know what I'd do.

We are "survivors" in that "this treasure in clay jars" is dependent upon the "extraordinary power [which] belongs to God [alone], and [which] does not come from us". (2 Cor. 4:7). After all, echoing the words of Fredrick Buechner, it is grace that we are alive. It is grace that we

breathe and sleep and dream and wake up. Everyday we find ourselves alive is a good day; everyday is a day closer to God's glory. It is grace that we can cry or laugh. It is grace that we are loved, and it is grace that we may love others as well.

A crucial eccentricity of Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. There's nothing you have to do. The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can separate us. It's for you I created the universe.

Yes, grace is what it is all about, and "as it extends to more and more people", Paul concludes, it may well be that it will "increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God". (2 Cor. 4:15). **R**

Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg is senior minister of Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C.



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**Merfield, Russell R.**, Glenview, Toronto, Elder since 1968. Treasurer and member of the Building Corporation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, he also served on several National Committees of the PCC. He was a member of the Planning Committee for the Ontario Prayer Breakfast. He wrote a history of Glenview for the 75 Anniversary Celebrations.

**Meyer, Gys**, aged 83, died January 19, 2005. Born in Netherlands. Manager, member St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Pictou County, N.S.

**Rawana, Reginald Peter**, aged 76, long time faithful member and elder at Malvern Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, Ont., passed away on March 11, 2005.

**West, Frances Lamoine**, of Madoc, Ont., in her 93 year, peacefully at her home on Saturday, June 19, 2004. Daughter of the late George and Carrie West, Belleville, Ont. Sister of the late Ken West. Beloved aunt of Linda and Bob Tomlinson, Toronto. Great aunt of Lesley Tomlinson, Edmonton, Alta., and Dean and Lisa Tomlinson, Toronto.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST. **Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: pcrecord@presbyterian.ca**

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# The Presbyterian Opinion

*(There is no such thing, they're much too nice.)*

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Newmarket, ON L3Y 1M5  
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e-mail: nmkstand@on.aibn.com**

## vacancies

### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES and INTERIM MODERATORS

#### Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Charlottetown, PEI; Zion Church; Rev. Paula Hamilton, 19 Tamarac Ave., Charlottetown, PEI C1A 6T2; 902-626-3268; hamilton@isn.net.

Chatham (Miramichi), NB; Calvin; Black River Bridge, St. Paul's; Kouchibouquac, Knox. Rev. J. Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy., (Newcastle) Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2; 506-622-5441; rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.

Eastern Charlotte pastoral charge, NB (St. George; Pennfield). Rev. Dr. Paul Brown, 117 Germain St., Saint John, NB E2L 2E9; 506-634-1760; pbrown@biblesociety.ca.

Fredericton, St. Andrew's (youth and families ministry); Rev. Douglas Blaikie, 512 Charlotte St., Fredericton, NB E3B 1M2; 506-455-8220; minister@sapc.ca.

Hunter River, PEI; Glasgow Road; Brookfield; Rev. Dr. Gordon Matheson, PO Box 275, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7K4; stapmath@eastlink.com.

Tatamagouche Pastoral Charge: Sedgwick Memorial, Tatamagouche, St. Matthew's, Wallace and St. John's, Pugwash. Interim-moderator Richard E. Sand, 37 Mountain Rd., New Glasgow, NS B2H 3K7; acersand@ns.sympatico.ca.

Woodstock, St. Paul's New Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Adams, 1991 Hwy. 640, Hanwell, NB E3C 1Z5

#### Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Montreal, Chinese; Rev. J.S.S. Armour, 101 Creswell Dr., Beaconsfield, QC H9W 1E1; 514-426-4688; jss@magma.ca.

Ottawa, St. Andrew's (minister of Christian development); Rev. Charlene Wilson, 579 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, ON K1Y 4K1; jcwilson@magma.ca.

Ottawa, St. Giles; Rev. Andrew Johnston, Interim Moderator; St. Andrew's, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; aj@standrewsottawa.ca.

Pincourt, QC, Ile Perrot; David Morris, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4378; dafydd.rich@sympatico.ca.

#### Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Angus, Zion; Rev. Ed Hoekstra, Box 821, Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0; 705-686-3648; edhoekstra@encode.com.

Campbellford, St. Andrew's; Burnbrae, St. Andrew's; Rev. Roger Millar, PO Box 327, Norwood, ON K0L 2V0; 705-639-5846; rnmillar@personainternet.com.

Grand Valley, Knox Presbyterian and Trinity United; Rev. Pieter Van Harten, P.O. Box 342, Acton, ON L7J 2M4; 519-853-2360

Guelph, Westminster St. Paul's; Rev. Jeff Veenstra, 73 Queen St. E, Cambridge, ON N3C 2A9; jeff.veenstra@sympatico.ca.

Kirkfield, St. Andrew's; Bolsover, St. Andrew's; Woodville, Woodville Community Presbyterian; Rev. Barney Grace, PO Box 465, Beaverton, ON L0K 1A0; 705-426-9475; kbwchargeoffice@sympatico.ca.

Lakefield, St. Andrew's; Lakehurst, Knox; Rev. William Baird, 68 Lang Rd., RR 3, Keene, ON K0L 2G0; Tel/Fax 705-295-6874.

Markham, St. Andrew's; Minister of New Development; Rev. Bob Smith, 271 Centre St., Thornhill, ON L4J 1G5; 905-889-5391; rhsmith@tpchurch.net.

North Bay, Calvin; Rev. Wallace Little, PO Box 983, Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0; 705-384-5453; awlittle@sympatico.ca. (effective July 31, 2005)

Palmerston, Knox; Drayton, Knox; Rev. Dr. Brice L. Martin, 190 Tucker St., PO Box 159, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0; bricelmartin@yahoo.com.

Sault Ste. Marie, Westminster; (Interim Minister) Rev. Dan Reeves; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.

Thornton, Ivy; half time pastor (3-yr. Canada Ministries appointment); Patrick Voo; 110 Line 7 South, PO Box 8, Oro, ON L0L 2X0; 705-487-1998; pvoo@trinitycommunity.org.

Toronto, Patterson; Rev. Zoltan Vass, 439 Vaughan Rd, Toronto, ON M6C 2P1; 416-656-1342

Toronto, Runnymede; Rev. William Adamson, 680 Annette St., Toronto, ON M6S 2C3; bandbadamson@sympatico.ca

Toronto, St. Andrew's, Humber Heights; Rev. Garth Wilson, 155 Wychwood Ave., Toronto, ON M6C 2T1.

Toronto, University Church; Rev. Bryn MacPhail, 15 Lambeth Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9A 2Y6; bryn@reformedtheology.ca.

Warkworth, St. Andrew's; Hastings, St. Andrew's; Rev. Rylan Montgomery, PO Box 328, Colborne, ON K0K 1S0; 613-475-4675; rylan.montgomery@gmail.com.

West Hill, Grace; Rev. Issa Saliba, 209 Cochrane St., Whitby, ON L1N 5H9; standrewschurch@bellnet.ca.

#### Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Atwood, Atwood Church; Rev. Lillian Wilton, 68 Main St., Exeter, ON N0M 1S1; 519-235-2784; caven@tcc.on.ca.

Chesley, Geneva Church; Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie, RR 3, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0; Phone: 519-363-5392; Fax: 519-363-0975

Hamilton, MacNab Street; Half-Time Youth Minister; Alex Abraham, 116 MacNab St S, Hamilton, ON L8P 3C3; macnabstreet@msn.com.

London, Korean Christian; Mr. Sam Lim, 530 Topping Lane, London, ON N6J 3M7; Bus: 519-472-0360; Home: 519-681-3828 samlimca@yahoo.ca;

Niagara Falls, Stamford; Rev. Frank De Vries, 4511 Ivy Gardens Cres., Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5; 905-563-1264; aartdev@aol.com.

Paisley, Westminster; Glammis, St. Paul's; Rev.

## vacancies

continued

Wendy Lampman, PO Box 166, Tiverton, ON N0G 2T0; 519-368-7235; knoxtiverton@bmts.com.

Sheffield, Knox; Kirkwall Presbyterian; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Don Donaghey; 905-627-3043; don.donaghey@sympatico.ca.

Southampton, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Doug Lennox, PO Box 836, RR 1, Sauble Beach, ON N0H 2G0; dlennox@sympatico.ca.

Thamesville, St. James; Rev. Andrew Song, 551 Victoria Ave., Dresden, ON N0P 1M0; 519-683-6675.

Welland, St. Andrews; Rev. Douglas Schonberg, 8280 Willoughby Dr., Niagara Falls, ON L2G 6X2; 905-295-4231; minister@chippawapc.ca.

Wyoming-Camlachie, St. Andrew's, Wyoming, Knox, Camlachie; Rev. Margaret Wisner, PO Box 391, Courtright, ON N0N 1H0; 519-867-5562; wallace.mw@sympatico.ca.

### Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Winnipeg, St. John's; Rev. Brenda Fraser, 2373 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R2V 4T6; 204-339-3502; kpresbyc@mts.net.

Thompson, St. Andrew's; Rev. Matthew Brough, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB, R1A 1N1; 204-482-6425; mcbrough@shaw.ca.

### Synod of Saskatchewan

Melfort, St. James; Tisdale, St. Andrew's; Rev. George Yando, 314-24th St. W, Prince Albert, SK S6V 4N1; 306-922-2718; geoyando@sasktel.net.

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Swift Current, St. Andrew's (full- or part-time); Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4V 1A4; 306-522-9571; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

### Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Bassano, AB, Knox, Gem, Gem Church; Rev. D.V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; 403-526-3512; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

Director of Regional Ministries; Please check the synod website for details and contact person: www.synodabnw.ca.

Edmonton, Mill Woods; Rev. Richard Frotten, 13820-109A Ave., Edmonton, AB T5M 2K1; frotten@shaw.ca.

Medicine Hat, AB, Riverside; Rev. Dr. Bob Cruickshank, 504 2 St. SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0C6; 403-526-4542; st\_johns@telusplanet.net.

### Synod of British Columbia

Campbell River, BC, Trinity (vacant May 1st); Rev. D'Arcy Lade, 725 Aspen Rd., Comox, BC V9M 4E9; 250-339-2882; cvpc@shaw.ca.

Port Alberni, BC, Knox; Rev. Don Lindsay,

4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; 250-668-0041; standrewsdon@pacificcoast.net.

Prince George, BC, St. Giles Presbyterian Church (vacant June 1st); Interim Moderator John Wyminga, RR 5, PO Box 6, Niyas Site, Quesnel, BC V2J 3H9; 250-249-9611; carpresb@uniserve.com.

Richmond, BC, Richmond Presbyterian Church; Rev. R.C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Court, Mission, BC; V4S 1B8; 604-462-0858; garvins@shaw.ca

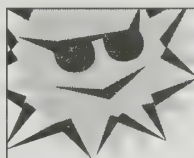
All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: \$10 for the basic notice and \$1 per word for additional information. (There is no charge for congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.) **Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: pcrecord@presbyterian.ca**

## Ordinations and inductions

January 16, Recognition Service for Gwen Roberts as minister of St. Matthew's, Elmsdale and Hardwoodlands, NS.

March 17, Recognition Service for Nancy L. Cocks since January 1 a Professor at Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, NS.

March 29, Induction of Brian R. Ross as minister of St. James', Truro and St. Paul's, McClure's Mills, NS.



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(403) 320.6822  
[vcbrand@telusplanet.net](mailto:vcbrand@telusplanet.net)**



# called to wonder

Written by Erin Walton,  
First Church, Edmonton

## What is Pentecost?

Pentecost is the seventh Sunday after Easter. It is the day that the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' followers, just like he promised. They were waiting in a room together. There was the sound of a wind and flames appeared on the heads of the people and the Holy Spirit came to all of them. All of them were able to speak in languages they didn't know. After this Jesus' followers started to tell everyone they could about Jesus and his gift to us.

The colour of Pentecost is red. The red symbolizes both the fire of Pentecost as well as the passion of the apostles and early followers of Jesus who were gathered in the Upper Room to be filled with the Holy Spirit.



## What are the Fruits of the Spirit?

They aren't something to eat! In Galatians 5:22 Paul lists some ways that we will act if we have the Holy Spirit living in us. They are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

When Paul calls these things fruit he is being figurative or symbolic. He means that we are like a tree with fruit. We will do these good things because the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts.

## Pentecost Activities:

- ◆ Hang some red streamers from a tree and watch the wind move them!
- ◆ Fly a kite with a friend.
- ◆ Ask your parents to build a fire (in your fireplace, firepit etc). Roast hot dogs or marshmallows.
- ◆ Read Acts 2:1-13 with your family and answer the following questions:

What did they hear? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the sound come from? \_\_\_\_\_

What did they see? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they filled with? \_\_\_\_\_

Find more learning activities online at:  
[www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html](http://www.presbyterian.ca/record/wonder.html)



## A shared human dignity — adieu to John Paul II

It is fitting and it is proper to bid farewell to Pope John Paul II. The Presbyterian Church in Canada extends its sincerest sympathy to the Roman Catholic community in Canada on the passing of its pontiff. More than any of his 262 predecessors he was known as one who reached out to embrace the ecumenical movement and to acknowledge that relations have not always been smooth between Christian denominations.

In 1984 at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, John Paul II prayed for full communion among Christians. He was particularly concerned about a rapprochement with Orthodox churches acknowledging that there had been a strained relation between the “successors” of the brothers, Andrew and Peter.

Perhaps most noteworthy for Canadian Presbyterians, people nurtured in

the light of the Protestant Reformation, was his invitation to the entire Roman Catholic Church to apologize for the sins committed during its history which contributed towards division between Christians. In Rome on March 13, 2000, he sought forgiveness from other churches for sins committed against them by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.

John Paul II was also a man who sought dialogue with people of other faiths. He met twice — in 1986 and in 2002 — with leaders of the major world religions to join him to pray for world peace. It is particularly remarkable that he was the first Pope to visit and pray in a synagogue and in a mosque. In Jerusalem in 2000, he stated, “I assure the Jewish people that the Catholic Church ... is deeply saddened by the hatred, acts of persecution and displays of anti-Semitism

directed against Jews by Christians at any time.”

The following year in Syria he stated, “For all the times that Muslims and Christians have offended one another, we need to seek forgiveness from the Almighty God and offer each other forgiveness.”

Karol Wojtyla’s life was his ministry and his ministry was his life. We sympathize with those who keenly feel his departure. We look forward to the day when even greater strides will be made by Christians of good will to more fully realize the meaning of the prayer of Jesus Christ, “That they may all be one.”

*Rick Fee*

### Moderator’s itinerary

#### May 1

St. Paul’s, St. Albert, Sask (morning)  
First Church, Regina (evening)

#### May 2

Presbytery of Assiniboia  
AIDS Presentation at Whitewood

#### May 4

Women’s Missionary Society, Crieff

#### May 7

Presbytery of West Toronto Breakfast,  
Mimico Church

#### May 11

Knox College Convocation

#### May 14

Glen Mhor Camp 75 Anniversary at  
Trinity York Mills, Toronto

#### May 15

Chalmers Church, London, Ont.

#### May 29

Durham Church 150 Anniversary

Every month the *Record* publishes the Moderator’s itinerary. A few lines on the page — but each of these items is an event, a celebration of the Presbyterian family, a sharing of ministry and a continuation of an honorable tradition. Here are a few images of itineraries from the recent past.



With Rev. Philip Wilson,  
Eastmount, Hamilton, Ont.



With Karen  
Redman and  
speaker of the  
House Peter  
Milliken on  
Parliament  
Hill.



With Rev. Margaret  
Robertson, Elmvale, Ont.



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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

June 2005



## Summer Reads

Inspirations for longing hearts

**Trudeau's  
deepest secret**

**Seeking spirituality**

**Harpur's curious Christ**

**Breathing God's breath**





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PRESBYTERIAN  
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## SPECIAL FEATURE

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Seeking spirituality

Hapur's curious Christ

Breathing God's breath



## FEATURE

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# Bunches of roses (and a few thorns)

## Readers comment on the Record

**Y**ou're getting younger and we're getting better! No, that's not idle flattery. These are findings from our most recent reader survey conducted through the January issue. We've crunched the numbers and you are getting younger: more than a third of *Record* readers are between 65-75 years old. In 2003, the largest age category was the over 75.

The results also show that you continue to like the changes we have been making to the *Record*. This year, you gave us the highest approval rating ever, and we are delighted that we have pleased you.

One of the most important revelations of the survey is the immense loyalty of Presbyterians to the magazine. We reach almost three-quarters of the active membership of the church. No other religion magazine that depends on voluntary subscriptions is so widely read. Just as important, you spend more time reading the magazine than before.

These results are important because knowing how readers feel about a publication is the most important aspect of publishing. Letters to the editor and subscription renewals are another indication, but nothing beats asking readers directly and we appreciate the time and care you took in responding.

And what do you read? The editorial is where almost a third of readers turn first. Then it's Letters to the Editor followed by People and Places. We're guessing this means you like to read opinions on issues of the days and also see what other people in the church are doing and celebrating.

We are grateful for your affirmation and had hoped it existed because there are always a few thorns in any bouquet of roses. In 2004, the *Record* lost about 1,500 subscribers from a handful of churches because we published a couple of stories about ministers wanting the church to approve same-sex marriage. Other stories about a minister charged with sexual assault and details of national staff executive salaries, along with including a World Vision ad catalogue last fall, generated complaints to the editor and the board of directors.

The results of this survey have clearly shown that the majority of you want to read these and other stories for the same reason we publish all of them: they are about keeping everyone in the church, not just the clergy and some elders, informed about the life of the community, including the debates. We hope all our stories contribute to the transparency and integrity of the church.

And when you have an opinion on a story, we want to hear about it. Besides an expanded letters section, we have recently

opened a whole page for your thoughts on topical issues so that you don't have to be confined to the length of a letter. Send us 600 words on what you think about church, faith, ethics or family life.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. Your answers will help us improve the *Record*. Over the coming months, we are planning new columnists and wider news coverage. We are also launching a new web site, [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca). As the site develops, subscribers can expect exclusive, premium web content — material that won't be in the magazine and won't be available to the general public.

We take your loyalty seriously as a trust to speak truth to silence and power. We promise to keep bringing you news about individuals and churches across Canada (along with egregious photos of celebration cakes!). We shall continue to explore stories that affect our society, as we have with the tsunami, AIDS, nutrition and free trade, told through the voices of caring Presbyterians. Future issues will look at genetic engineering, why some churches do better than others, the costs of maintaining church buildings, as well as the growing number of congregations whose ethnic roots are not Scottish.

Finally, there is no better opportunity than to let you in on some extremely happy news. As this issue was going to press, I learned that the *Record* team picked up 15 awards at the two major church press competitions this year. The *Record* was honoured for news stories, features, design, artwork, photography, humour and storytelling.

Highlights were two more awards for staff writer Amy MacLachlan, including first place in the Associated Church Press news story division for her June 2004 article, *East Toronto Presbytery Says No to Temporary Approval of Same-Sex Marriage*. First places were awarded by the Canadian Church Press to storyteller David Webber and humourist Peter Plymley II, as well as for magazine cover design and editorial writing. Overall, the magazine placed second among denominational publications in Canada.

We're proud of our *Record* and are working to make it even better for you. We hope you're proud too. ☺

David Harris

## The wages of retirement

As the retired wife of our retired clergy, it was with rising indignation that I read the news of the raises for executive staff and professors as outlined in March. In conversations with other such wives, I know that they share my feelings, and they have encouraged me to write this letter.

General Assembly in 2001 last approved raises for retired clergy. Many of us are of the generation when it was mandatory to serve two years (and many stayed longer) in churches supported by the Mission Fund, receiving the basic stipend, out of which we bought our own appliances and paid all utility bills while living in sometimes ancient and substandard manses. When our children were young there were no health or dental benefits and many wives who started out dedicated to serving the church ended up seeking employment which supplied these benefits, supplemented the basic stipend, and helped to educate our children, for which we were criticized because, "We need somebody there to answer the phone!" In those early years there was little left of the basic stipend to save for our retirement. In those days we received monthly cheques from a fund provided by a generous donor for young clergy families in mission charges. Perhaps we need another such guardian angel in our retirement!

We donate regularly to the church college, our local congregation and every special fund that arises and, of course, to

Presbyterians Sharing. If the Presbyterians Sharing budget can contribute funds for college grants, some of which seem to be used for professors' salaries, how about a little Presbyterian sharing with your retired clergy?

Doreen Beaton  
Harrow, Ont.

## No fairness in coffee trade

As a seasoned East African expatriate I would like to share some background on coffee with your readers.

There are two basic types of coffee: Arabica (Kenya, Tanzania, Central America etc.), full of aroma and high acidity and the much inferior cheaper Robusta (Uganda, Ivory Coast, for example) with little taste and in essence a filler only. It is that filler that the North American coffee traders love to buy in vast quantities. To give you an idea: in my time (a long time ago now) Kenya/Tanzania Arabica fetched £600 a ton and Uganda Robusta (grown at lower altitudes) £175 a ton. My guess is that that gap still exists.

A friend who knows well the coffee trade assures me that the traditional middlemen have, for all intents and purposes, been eliminated by the powerful buyers/roasters. The middlemen can no longer be accused of causing the plight of the farmers. I reason that supporting the suffering coffee farmers only puts them further in the mud. Better would be for them to diversify, as the Frisians

in the Netherlands had to do from declining dairy into cash crops like wheat and beans. Farmers in the prairies let wheat go in favour of flax, canola and alfalfa in pellets.

Coos de Vries  
Beaconsfield, Que.

## Variety of voices welcomed

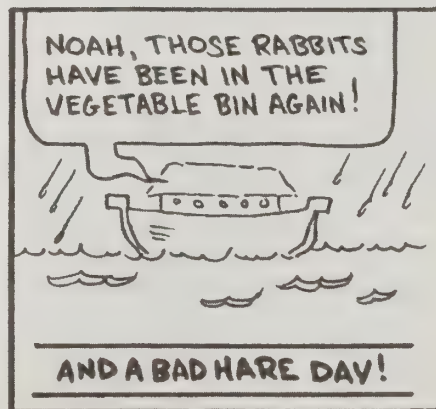
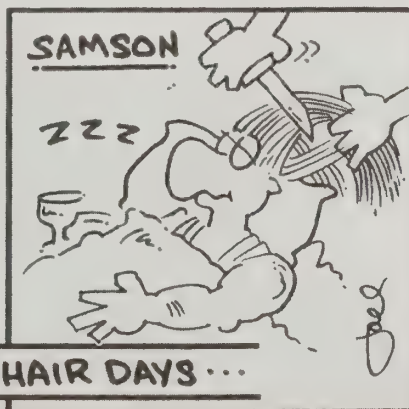
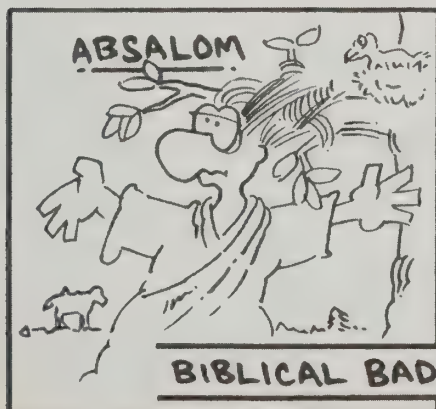
Not often do I read a magazine cover to cover in one sitting but I did with the May *Record*. Congratulations on a really terrific issue. I'm especially interested in the cover story on Fair Trade as I have family in Zambia who are Fair Trade honey producers. Despite the decline in readership, the *Record* continues to be a must read in my household and I appreciate that there is room for a wide range of voices to be heard on a wide range of issues. It's a slippery slope to intolerance: should we want just one point of view represented? Congrats on a terrific issue and I look forward to rereading the articles at a more leisurely pace throughout the month!

Elizabeth Johnston  
London, Ont.

## Learning knows no end

As a former professor at Knox College I would like to build on Clive Ervine's article in May. Firstly there should be a constant updating of theology and biblical interpretation to reflect not just what the professor believes and has studied but also the different opinions that are cur-

## Pontius' Puddle



BIBLICAL BAD-HAIR DAYS...

AND A BAD HARE DAY!



# PRESBYTERIAN Record

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Letters continued

rently being expressed in these disciplines. It is important students realize that people in their congregation are reading books by Bishop John Spong, Walter Wink, Marcus Borg and the writers of the Jesus Seminars. Usually, only people in the congregation with the professional training to lead these groups are the minister and a fortunate congregation that has a diaconal minister as well. But they need to go on learning in order to help others to learn.

I received a very good foundational preparation in the Bible and theology as a student at Knox College, including both biblical languages. But after graduation through conferences and personal reading I realized there were many other people out there worth listening to as well. Theological education does not stop at the college convocation. It is actually just beginning.

Helen Goggin

*Professor Emeritus of Religious Education  
Knox College, Toronto.*

## Nigeria factors intolerance

I read with interest Rick Fee's article The Nigeria Factor in February.

Although it may have been true in the past that Nigeria was a model for tolerance, it would not seem to hold much credibility now. I quote from Religious Freedom in the World by Paul Marshall, published in 2000. The country profile of Nigeria states: "It is estimated that 13,000 Nigerians, both Muslim and Christian but mainly Christian, have died as a result of religious conflicts since 1980."

Also, organizations such as Voice of the Martyrs, who are dedicated to helping persecuted Christians around the world and spreading awareness in the West, report mobs incited by Muslim militants attacking villages, burning churches and homes, and killing Christians. In 2004, in the state of Plateau, 1,500 Christians were killed and 173 church buildings destroyed. The Zamfara state governor declared last April that all non-Islamic places of worship would soon be destroyed. On February 9, it was reported that militant Muslims had pronounced a death sentence on five Christians expelled from schools in Nigeria, for sharing

the gospel with Muslim students. These are just a few examples of what is happening in Nigeria.

Alasdair L. Coats

*Canmore, Alta.*

## Tolerance: sin or virtue?

Moffatt's blanket statement that "Christian fundamentalists consistently declare the virtue of human tolerance a sin" is hurtful. Perhaps if the words were to read "human tolerance of sin is a virtue" it would be more palatable to Moffatt, but hardly Reformed teaching which she would like us to believe she espouses.

Her tirade against the child psychologist, Dr. James Dobson inspired me to immediately send a donation to Focus on the Family. Dr. Dobson portrays Reformed theology in that he persuades believers to bring all of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. He encourages men, women, children and young people to live according to biblical principles not according to the Sojourner's "manifesto".

Jean Clelland

*Calgary*

## A nurse in a church

I am writing to thank the *Record* and Amy Cameron for an excellent article on parish nursing in March. However, I would like to make one correction. The article stated that parish nursing began in Canada "as early as 1992". In actual fact, Barbara Caiger, RN, began her role as a "nurse in a church" (parish nurse) at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Thornhill, Ont., in 1988. It was close to the time that the Reverend Granger Westburg started to develop his concept of parish nursing in the United States and well before any word of it had strayed north of the border. Barbara Caiger served in this role from 1988 until her retirement at the end of 2003. She is currently completing a book that comprises her collected wisdom from this experience. It will be available in the next few months, and is a valuable resource for anyone interested in this ministry.

Margaret E. Black, RN, EdD, PN

*Tri-Congregational Parish*

*Nursing Ministry*

*North York, Ont.*

## Not losing lost Presbyterians

This letter is in response to Brand Power, Searching For Lost Presbyterians in the March issue. The Presbyterian Church in Canada will not find lost members as long as we keep striking them from our rolls. Where do you think they will go when they are ready to return to a church? It sure won't be a Presbyterian church. Many young people today are active in many places doing good where they can. Many of the people are still dedicated Christians and doing the Lord's work in their own quiet way. Possibly when their lives are less stressed they will return to a church with many good years left to serve. Once a child is baptized we cannot undo their baptism, likewise we cannot undo the profession of faith between them and their God.

Why then can we not simply have a roll of inactive members, keep in touch with them with newsletters or advertisements of functions while keeping them constantly in our prayers? When and if these members return they can then be put back on our roll of active members.

The churches of course would be responsible to pay dues for active members only. If we want to find lost Presbyterians let's not lose them to begin with.

*Frances Johnson  
Ridgeville, Ont.*

## Either way, more cake at Comox

Although I was pleased to see a picture from the induction of Rev. D'Arcy Lade at Comox Valley, B.C., in your May People & Places, I feel that I need to point out an error in your comment about that event.

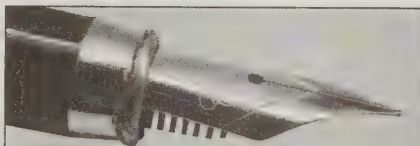
Although inductions usually are the start of a person's ministry somewhere, in some cases they occur after some time in the particular pastoral charge. This is the case in Comox, where D'Arcy has been the minister for about ten years before his Induction. For those first years, he was under appointment from Canada Ministries of the Life and Mission Agency. Therefore, if you were to return in ten years (as you put it in your commentary), you would find D'Arcy celebrating his tenth anniversary of his induction, but his 20th year of being the minister of the congregation – the same amount of time the congregation itself has been around.

*Gordon Haynes  
Associate Secretary  
Canada Ministries*

## Corrections

We apologize to Mathew Goslinski, whose name was misspelled in the May issue.

A story in the April issue on changing chaplains' badges reported that the PCC employs nine military chaplains. Their formal employer is actually the Canadian Forces. We apologize for any confusion.



**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**

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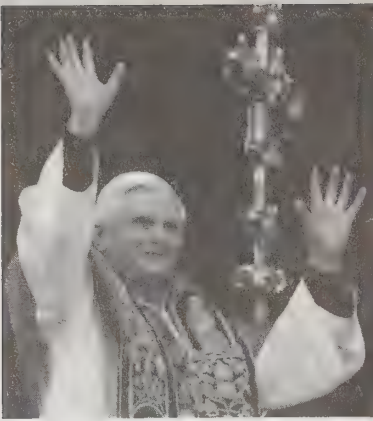
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# The ecumenical Pope

*Benedict not as hard lined as Ratzinger*

by Joseph Sinasac

The Roman Catholic Church has elected a new leader to great cheers, but in certain circles there is little enthusiasm for Pope Benedict XVI. Those labouring in the vineyards of ecumenical dialogue are worried about what they can expect from this man who, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, they believe is responsible for putting the brakes on the great progress made during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

Already some commentators have prophesied the entrenchment of conservatism and authoritarian rule from the Vatican. One such leader, the Rev. Malcolm Sinclair of Toronto's Metropolitan United Church, complained of "old men wielding old doctrines" (*Globe and Mail*, April 25, Letters to the Editor). But a close examination of the new Pope would suggest that it is far too soon to pass judgment on how he will approach the minefields of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

Ecumenists recall vividly Cardinal Ratzinger's bid to influence the shape of ecumenical dialogue a few years ago. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — the Vatican office charged with defending doctrinal purity — Cardinal Ratzinger issued *Dominus Iesus* (Lord Jesus) in August 2000, a document that sought to bring stark clarity to Catholic teaching of the nature of Jesus and His mission of salvation for the world. It most certainly met its objective, but it also angered other Christian denominations who were insulted that the document argued some of them were not churches in the proper sense and that the fullness of salvation could only be found through the Catholic Church.

Though *Dominus Iesus* merely repeated traditional Catholic teaching, its uncompromising language created a reputation for the cardinal as a church leader opposed to real ecumenical dialogue. Now, as Pope, he is well positioned to halt any further progress.

Yet *Dominus Iesus* is not the church's last — or even most authoritative — word on ecumenism. Nor does it represent a full picture of what Pope Benedict XVI will do. In fact, some of the new Pope's first words and gestures suggest hope for the ecumenical movement rather than pessimism.

In his first message as Pope, delivered to the College of Cardinals the day after his April 19 election, he promised that "full and visible unity of all His (Jesus') disciples" would be his primary commitment. He added that he is "fully determined to cultivate any initiative that may seem appropriate to promote contact and agreement with representatives from the various churches and ecclesial communities."

"Theological dialogue is necessary," Benedict said, recalling Pope John Paul's historic gesture of global reconciliation in 2000 when he asked forgiveness for all those sins committed by church leaders of the past, notably those involved in the Inquisition, contributing to the divisions in Christianity and against Jews. As John Paul's successor, Benedict said he too is "personally implicated in this question," implying that he believed his own pontificate needs to continue the Catholic Church's examination of conscience and carry on its dialogue with other Christians in a spirit of humility.

In Benedict's own inaugural Mass, before some 300,000 people in St. Peter's Square on April 24, the Gospel was chanted in both Latin and Greek, the latter language being that used in Orthodox and Eastern-rite Catholic liturgies. This was a clear signal to the Orthodox Churches of the Pope's desire to work on healing the millennium-old breach between the two churches.

Then, on April 25, Pope Benedict welcomed other Christian and faith leaders — including the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams — who had come to his inaugural Mass. During his remarks to them, he said he wanted to "reaffirm

the irreversible commitment" of the Catholic Church undertaken at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) to ecumenism.

Admittedly, it is early days in this pontificate. Pope Benedict will bear watching to see how he will turn these welcoming words into action. But it is worth recalling how far the Catholic Church has come since the days when it's understanding of ecumenism was "the return of the dissidents to the one true Church of Christ," as it declared in its 1949 Instruction on the Ecumenical Movement. Vatican II placed Catholics on an irreversible path and John Paul II sealed that journey.

Now Pope Benedict XVI, a theologian of Vatican II and a confidant of John Paul, is in charge. This is grounds for hope, not anxiety.

Joseph Sinasac is publisher and editor of *The Catholic Register*.

**Dominus Iesus is not the church's last — or even most authoritative — word on ecumenism**



**Most Rev. Donald Theriault, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Military Diocese and Roman Catholic Representative Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy and Col. David Kettle, Director of Chaplaincy Administration, Education and Training lead an ecumenical group gathered,**

**appropriately enough to bless a new baptismal font, at 8 Wing Trenton Chapel, in Ontario. This marks the first time, in a Canadian Forces Chapel, that all forms of baptism can be performed at one font. Water flows constantly into the tank symbolizing the living waters of Christian faith.**

## WCC discusses aspects of globalization

"WHAT I WOULD EXPECT as we go about our work on mission and evangelization in the 21st century is that we recognize the diversity of the multi-faith reality of the world today," said Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of World Council of Churches which met in Athens in May. Warning against "religiously-fuelled racism, culture wars and the clash of civilizations," Kobia said many exponents of particular religions intentionally discounted people of different beliefs and encouraged aggressive behaviour towards them. He noted that interfaith dialogue would be a priority for the WCC.

But there are rifts within the WCC itself. This was the first time, since 1910 that the Catholic Church sent a full delegate. And the Greek Orthodox church was under attack by some of its own members for conversing with other denominations.

Still the opportunity for dialogue was welcome at the conference, whose theme was "Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile."

Continuing shifts in global dynamics "though often providing healing, joy and comfort, may also create tensions and disunity," said Kobia in his keynote address to the conference.

The global gathering of church leaders ended with calls to respond to Christianity's rapid growth in Africa and Asia and to engage in dialogue with other believers. It also heard calls for churches to deal with other global challenges including the world's HIV/AIDS pandemic, and what was described as a global system that concentrates economic power in fewer hands.

— Stephen Brown, ENI

## European Christian leaders applaud anti-euthanasia vote

CHURCH LEADERS IN EUROPE have welcomed a vote by the Council of Europe parliamentarians not to approve euthanasia, saying they believe instead in good care being provided for terminally-ill patients.

"We are convinced there are alternatives to allowing euthanasia, without hiding away from the problem," said the Rev. Richard Fischer of the Conference of European Churches, which groups 126 mostly Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches in Europe.

Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the 46-country Council of Europe rejected a resolution — introduced by Swiss Radical Liberal legislator Dick Marty — that would have approved doctor-assisted suicide for terminally-ill patients.

Marty noted in a report that two European countries, Belgium and the Netherlands, had passed laws that specifically address the issue of euthanasia. He argued that medical developments had made it "even more necessary to assist sick people in the last phase of life," and that public opinion in Europe favoured allowing euthanasia in certain cases.

— Jonathan Luxmore, ENI





## China seeks ministers for post-denominational church

*Presbyterians build bridges along the Silk Road*

by Amy MacLachlan

**T**he situation of ordained pastors in China is totally inadequate," said Rev. Ronald Wallace, associate secretary for International Ministries. With only one ordained minister to every 7,000 church members of the China Christian Council, educating clergy is a top priority – and something the Presbyterian church is supporting. By contrast, in Canada, there is one minister per 180 members. Despite China's severe lack of ministers, Wallace and his colleagues were impressed by the work of the council, which they witnessed during a visit to the Far East in April.

Wallace was accompanied by Rev. Ian Morrison, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, Rev. Sarah Kim, executive director, Women's Missionary Society, and Margaret McGillivray, WMS president. Together, they travelled to China on April 6 to 18 along with Anglican and United Church representatives. The three denominations enjoy a long-standing partnership with the China Christian Council, the umbrella organization that oversees government-recognized Protestant churches. Their visit was intended to celebrate and strengthen friendships between churches in Canada and China.

The three denominations sponsor doctoral candidates from China to study at the Toronto School of Theology. Currently, Chinese churches must rely on about 80,000 lay staff to fill pulpit holes. There is also a need for more Chinese bibles, particularly in minority languages and Old Testament translations. The CCC's Amity Press has published 25 million Bibles and 10 million hymnals to date. The Bibles are distributed easily and inexpensively.

### A post-denominational church

The CCC is the melding of denominations brought to China by missionaries, and is an attempt to cast off Western influences in

favour of one Chinese church. "It's a post-denominational movement," said Wallace. "They strive to deemphasize denominational differences."

There were only 700,000 recognized Protestants in China in 1949. Today, the official Protestant church members are about 16 million; unofficially the number could be as high as 50 million. There are an estimated eight million Catholics but the church has no official status because of the Vatican's relationship with Taiwan. It is estimated that more than 18,000 government-recognized church buildings are open for public worship. "We were impressed by what we saw in the church and in China," said Wallace. "The economy is experiencing incredible growth. It's just booming."

China's underground church movement remains restricted. About 25,000 Protestant groups meet in private homes today. Small prayer and Bible meetings are legal; however, if they grow to a certain size or meet in public venues without the government's approval, their actions are not allowed.

Despite restrictions, the government allows informal evangelism. "The government sees Christians as orderly, law-abiding, hard-working people," said Wallace. He said Christians easily tell their friends about Jesus and invite them to church, and often tell non-believers they will pray for them. It's what Ian Morrison calls "neighbourhood evangelism".

### Looking back

Christian leaders established ties with the government when communist rule took over in 1949. With the workings of the church significantly controlled, Christians either cooperated with the government's requirements to remain active, or refused and went underground. In an effort to ensure loyalty, the

government established the Three Self Patriotic Movement in 1950. The vision was to become a church that was self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing.

Change occurred again following the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), when religious freedoms were restored. In 1980, Anglican Bishop K.H. Ting announced that the movement's goals had been accomplished. Unsatisfied with achievement alone, Ting said it was necessary to do these things well, leading to the creation of the CCC. The council manages the work of the churches, and although it doesn't consider itself a denomination, it produces a catechism, hymn books, training manuals and supervises 18 seminaries.

## Looking ahead

As of March 1, the Regulations on Religious Affairs came into being, bringing the Chinese church further under the rule of law, to allegedly protect citizens' rights. The change remains controversial, but Wallace said the Chinese church welcomes it. The regulations do tighten restrictions in areas such as religious training, government approval before establishing a new church site and prohibiting preaching in public spaces outside a designated religious site. However, the regulations also give churches (and mosques, Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples), rights and duties and clarifies who they are. Though allegedly assuring religious freedom, many argue it actually tightens the government's grip on the church.

## Wartime memorial brings atrocities to light

THE SITE OF a 68-year-old massacre made Ronald Wallace stop and think. During his visit to China, accompanied by a Canadian ecumenical delegation, Wallace walked on the ground where more than 350,000 Chinese civilians and unarmed soldiers were murdered, and 80,000 women and girls were raped by Japanese forces. "The atrocity of war really hits you," he said. "It was quite moving."

A memorial has been crafted over the site — permanently and publicly displaying the atrocities that occurred there between 1937 and 1938. The then-Chinese capital, Nanking, was invaded by Japan during that time, and the war crimes of the soldiers and those who ordered such cruelty went unpunished.

That failure — and the refusal of Japan to acknowledge and apologize for the works of its hands — has sparked the recent uprising in China and the ensuing conflict between the two countries. The demonstrations and mass rallies were something Wallace, associate secretary of the Presbyterian church's International Ministries, and his colleagues didn't encounter on their visit. Wallace did hear people talking though, and he himself can remember the steps taken by Japanese officials to

keep the past buried. Having spent five years in Japan starting in 1976, the cover-up is nothing new. "They were already changing information in textbooks," he said.

Having now seen the place that the textbooks omit, Wallace's understanding of the situation is complete. While at the memorial, he looked upon a huge field. For him, the field itself, sprawling and green and covering the atrocities that came before it, had little impact. However, one small section of the mass grave had been excavated and was open to the public, covered only by a glass ceiling. As Wallace peered into the cavern, what he saw were bones. Hundreds of bones — thousands even. He wondered how many more were hidden beneath the soil and sod. "When you see the excavated area and the bones lying there, and you read the descriptions of the people who died, the reality is very stark," said Wallace.

Tourists, history buffs, and friends and relatives of those who were killed, visit the site everyday. And now, those who still harbour anger are rising up. "They want an apology," said Wallace. "Japan made a statement years ago, but they didn't say sorry. They used the word 'regret.' That isn't what the Chinese want to hear." — AM



## The other Presbyterian record

MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE will be 100 years old in October, and it has a Presbyterian to thank for its name. Lt.-Col. John Bayne Maclean was the son of a Presbyterian minister who emigrated from Scotland and settled in Crieff, Ont. Born in 1862, Maclean launched his first publication, *Canadian Grocer*, 25 years later. Other titles under his belt included the *Financial Post* and *Chatelaine*. It was the creation of *Maclean's* magazine — originally titled the *Busy Man's Magazine* — in 1905 that launched the media empire Maclean-Hunter Ltd. The company, now owned by Rogers Media, includes 120 Canadian periodicals and has expanded into radio, television and book publishing.

Opinionated and outspoken, the man known as The Colonel was chauffeured to work in a Rolls-Royce. Despite his riches, he never forgot his Presbyterian roots, giving 250 acres of land to the church. Crieff Hills Christian Retreat and Conference Centre is the result of that gift. Maclean died in 1950, a day short of his 88th birthday. — AM

## Women combine resources for peace

FOUR CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS for women are combining their resources to publish a special issue devoted to women and peace, in preparation for the International Day of Peace on Sept. 21. *Glad Tidings* magazine, published by the Presbyterian church's Women's Missionary Society, is the only Canadian church publication chosen. *Horizons* (published by PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Women), *Lutheran Woman Today* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and *Response* (United Methodist Women) are also involved.

The joint issue will appear in July. The ecumenical issue will reach a combined audience of 200,000 women, and will include articles on breaking the cycle of violence, women working for peace, girls and bullying and raising peaceful children.



# A Helping Hand



PHOTO: BELLA LAM, PWS&D

**Mrs. Gachie with her grandchildren Chriu and Ndirangu.**

Mrs. Gachie is looking after her three grandchildren, Ben (8), Chriu (5) and Ndirangu (3) in Shauri Yako, Tanzania. Her son, who used to be a police officer, is in the last stages of AIDS, and is no longer able to care for his family. Mrs. Gachie believes her daughter-in-law, who is often sick, is also HIV positive.

With no place to go, the family turned to Mrs. Gachie, to care for these children. Chriu and Ndirangu both go every day to Shauri Yako Youth Support Center – supported by PWS&D – for a hot lunch. While they are there they participate in games, singing and arts and crafts. The center provided a small loan to help Mrs. Gachie open a vegetable stall in the market in order to support her grandchildren. The center buys produce for the hot lunches from her stall.

Mrs. Gachie is one of hundreds of caregivers receiving support from PWS&D partners in Malawi and Tanzania as they struggle to provide for children who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, or whose parents are too sick to care for them.

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## Youth starve for those who have AIDS

by Amy MacLachlan

A GROUP OF YOUTH from Toronto starved themselves for a day to increase their awareness of HIV/AIDS and to raise money for the national church's Towards a World Without AIDS campaign. About 50 highschoolers gathered at Knox, Spadina, on April 22 and 23 for the annual East Toronto presbytery event and raised \$8,500 for the cause.

The youth were divided into four groups Friday night, were handed their team colours, and got ready for a weekend of games, music, worship, devotions, research and guest speakers. Bella Lam, program coordinator for Africa and the Middle East at Presbyterian World Service & Development, spoke about the far-reaching effects of AIDS in the world and gave detailed information on Tanzania, Kenya and Malawi, where PWS&D has a strong presence.

A spokesman from the People with AIDS Foundation shared his life story and his struggle to survive with the disease. "He spoke of his tragic life choices, but also about God's saving grace," said Rob Kennedy, youth coordinator at Knox and a member of the presbytery's youth committee that sponsored the event. "It was a real eye-opener and brought a face to the story of AIDS."

The weekend was not only a time for teens to learn about problems around the world and what the church is doing about them, but it was also an outreach to students who have no church connections. Kennedy said church-going teens often bring their friends along, building relationships that prompt them to participate in other youth events. The 10 hours of community service they get credit for also draws in teens who otherwise shy away from church events. "It becomes an outreach as churches can provide an opportunity to be blessed by community service," said Kennedy.

This year, the four teams chose various projects, including Evangel Hall, Portland Place and spring cleaning an apartment building that was recently damaged by fire.

The hunger weekend has been an event for five years now, with more participants each year. Eleven churches from the presbytery were represented. "We're not here to duplicate other youth programs," said Rob Ellis, youth leader at St. Mark's, "It's more about filling in the gaps. We hope to complement what the national church is doing, and what the congregations need."

## The Face of Aids

by Patricia Earl

Faces, smiling faces  
Children of Africa.  
Curly headed urchins, innocent eyes  
Searching, questioning — Why?  
Where has my mommy gone? Where is  
papa?  
How do we tell them?  
How can they understand?  
A scourge has swept across their country  
Devastating family, business and life.  
Aids — HIV positive, suffering, death.

Who will run the country?  
Who will till the soil? Who will teach  
the children?  
Gone. A generation wiped out, a gap  
growing wider with each passing day.  
Hunger, poverty, hopelessness.  
A pall of mourning hangs in the air,  
Tangible, weighing down those  
left behind.  
Villages deserted, ghosts of bygone days  
Waving in the desert winds.  
Children old before their time  
Forced to fend for self and siblings.

Outsiders gaze in unbelief.  
Mind boggling numbers penetrate  
the airways;  
Fingers pointing, judgment ripe  
Lifestyle- reaping what has been sown,  
Response to the demands of the flesh  
Has lead to disaster.  
One perpetrator in a family has doomed  
Progeny to illness and death.  
An entire continent sits on the brink  
Of obliteration.

Is there no hope, no cure in sight?  
Faces, smiling faces.  
Voices speaking hope.  
God is here, He loves us.  
Let us help one another  
Build a future, share resources.  
And from outside, may hearts be stirred  
And hands reach out to touch with  
Love and money, medicine and  
knowledge,  
Giving life and love until the darkness  
has past.

Patricia Earl goes to Knox, Manotick, Ont.  
She wrote this poem after an AIDS  
presentation at church.



## Anglicans continue study of same-sex blessings

A SPECIAL COMMISSION studying same-sex blessings has recommended that the issue is a matter of doctrine. The commission was set up in the wake of the 2004 debate on the issue at General Synod.

The recommendation will be studied at all levels of the church, and it will be at least 2007 before the church decides whether or not it will accept the recommendation. If it does, jurisdiction over same-sex blessings would become the responsibility of General Synod, and any change in national church law would require the approval of two successive General Synods.

The commission's recommendation was made at the Council of General Synod (the national governing body between General Synods) in May in Mississauga, Ont., where it also announced that the church will not participate fully in the Anglican Consultative Council in England in June. The move is intended to help restore unity within the Anglican Communion that has been damaged by the issue of same-sex blessings and gay ordination.

A request for the Canadian and U.S. churches to partially withdraw from the international body came at a meeting of Anglican primates in Ireland last February.

— with files from the *Anglican Journal*

## Fee raps Ottawa over aid

by Amy MacLachlan

The church's Moderator has sharply criticized the federal government's refusal to increase its foreign aid to the United Nations standard of 0.7 per cent of national GDP. "It's regrettable that when we're so privileged in Canada, we cannot even meet a minimum goal that was set many years ago," said Moderator Richard Fee. "One has to question priorities and how those priorities are being set."

Prime Minister Paul Martin announced his new international policy statement in April, which allows for yearly increases in aid of eight per cent. Aid groups say the commitment is a start, but is not enough to reach the 0.7 per cent benchmark by 2015 — the target set by the international community. Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have already made the mark.

Canada's current foreign aid commitment sits at 0.23 per cent — well behind the world average of 0.41. When he was minister of finance, Martin himself argued for the 0.7 per cent goal in 1984, when Canada's foreign aid spending was about double of what it is today. The prime minister said Canada simply cannot afford to meet the goal he endorsed 11 years ago.

Canada is also changing its aid funding policy. It will focus on 25 of the world's most needy countries, most of which are in Africa, in order to increase the impact of aid dollars, which are currently spread around 146.

Jim Cornelius, executive director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, of which the Presbyterian church is a strong supporter, said he and other NGOs provided input to the government while the policy was being developed. And although the final statement has positive aspects — such as bringing increased coherence to address international issues — what NGOs really wanted to see was absent. "Two years ago, a commitment was made by the Canadian International Development Agency to triple its support for agriculture and rural development, since most of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods," said Cornelius. "That commitment disappeared in this policy."

The oversight disappoints Sam Vander Ende, CFGB's representative in Africa. Based in Ethiopia — where food security is always a concern — he is disheartened by the government's continual failure to adequately address agricultural needs. "Agriculture is the heart and soul of most developing countries' economies. It is foundational to the well-being of some 60 million people. How could Canada leave this out?" he asked.

"In the past 10 to 15 years, influence has waned considerably. Increasing Canada's foreign aid would be an excellent opportunity to show leadership," said Vander Ende.

Not only does the policy fail to commit enough aid to countries in need, Cornelius said it also fails to provide a stronger link between government aid and civil society, both in Canada and developing countries. He said it is imperative to engage Canadians in aid work, helping them realize they are part of a larger world. "We're not just Canadians. We have a responsibility as global citizens to help improve things like poverty, health care and the environment."

Fee, who is also executive director of Presbyterian World Service & Development, said the church's programs are safe for the time being, because its aid programs are handled through individual contracts. "We're not affected this round, but remain concerned about the government's future vision."

"The government has a responsibility to look out for people who are least able to look out for themselves," said Ron Wallace, associate secretary of the church's International Ministries department.

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# Mexican mine saved from Metallica

by Amy MacLachlan

A Mexican town has been spared potential damage by a Canadian mining company, thanks in part to Canadian church leaders. For more than 10 years, the residents of Cerro de San Pedro had been fighting Canadian-owned Metallica Resources' plans to start an open-pit gold mine in their town. To help them in their plight, KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) sent an ecumenical church leaders' delegation to Mexico in March to investigate the situation. Former Presbyterian moderator, Rev. Mark Lewis, reported on the visit in May. "When we left the little town we promised the people we would do all we could to prevent a Canadian company from doing such harm on foreign soil," said Lewis. "I have never seen faith move a mountain, but now I have seen faith keep a mountain in its place."



Mark Lewis

Locals said the mine would threaten the community by destroying its ecosystem, contaminating the water supply and flattening the Hill of St. Peter, which is a state symbol. In April, the protesters' prayers were answered when a federal court upheld an earlier decision that named the town a preservation area, annulling the company's mining permit.

The decision was bolstered by the convergence of the trip's delegates in Ottawa to meet with MPs, present their findings and urge the Canadian government to investigate the situation.

Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, Gaëtan Lavertu later visited the 400-year-old Cerro de San Pedro – the first time an embassy official expressed any interest.

Despite the current victory, the fight is far from over. The complex controversy has so many law suits, appeals and conflicting opinions surrounding it, that the final outcome is still uncertain.

Metallica's CEO, Richard Hall, denies any claims made against his company's operations in San Pedro. "We continue to believe we are doing everything properly within the laws of Mexico," he said from his office in Denver. "We want to be contributing members of this town. Why in the world would we do something to destroy our reputation and the credit of this company when this is what we do for a living? It just doesn't pass the logic test."

Hall said Metallica has already sunk \$50 million into the project – with portions of that used to protect the town from damage. They transplanted 120,000 cactus plants that, in their mining permit, were said to be valued vegetation and had to be preserved. Families have been given homes if they wish to relocate, two historical churches have been reinforced to protect them from the blasts, and local citizens would be hired to work the mine. "These are all the right things to do. They're not issues for us," said Hall. Metallica has offered to clean up waste left by other companies, and restore parts of the hill that were made unstable from previous operations. Metallica will continue to challenge the court's decision.

Cerro de San Pedro has been a mining town since the 1500s.

Thanks to the court's ruling and the hill's designation as a national monument, the town is now closer to gaining status as a UNESCO World Heritage site. "We are now calling on authorities to ensure that the mining company vacates the area and removes all of its operations," said Ana Maria Alvarado Garcia, member of the Broad Opposition Front, which led the Mexican protest. "We are calling on Canadians for their solidarity in this case of ongoing injustice."

[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)

## Bhil prisoners still waiting for trial

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is willing to send more funds to India to help with the legal expenses of 13 Bhil Christians who were arrested following a local uprising last January. International Ministries already sent \$5,000. Of the 13 arrested, eight were charged with the death of a Hindu man. He was killed while Christians were protecting their homes and a church that were damaged during the attacks. Trial hearings have been repeatedly postponed because judges and witnesses fail to appear in court.

The church has been working with the Bhil people of Vindhya Satpura for more than 100 years. Pauline Brown, a Canadian missionary there, submits regular updates on the trial's progress. Presbyterian World Service & Development supports community health programs in the region, including the Jobat Christian Hospital. International Ministries posts updates on its website and keeps close contact with the Church of North India.

The church has asked the Indian government to stop extremist groups from terrorizing minorities, and to ensure justice is done for the families left homeless after their homes were burned. — AM

## Cycling for unity

THE CHRISTIAN Reformed Church is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a Sea to Sea cross-Canada bike tour beginning June 23. One hundred and sixty five cyclists have entered, with 97 scheduled for the entire Vancouver to Halifax trek. The event is intended to foster Christian unity and raise money for the church's Deep Roots, New Branches program that supports church planting across the country. Each cyclist has committed to raising \$10,000, for an expected total of \$1.2 million after expenses. Although no Presbyterians are on the roster that includes eight denominations, celebration rallies will be held every Sunday in cities along the route, where supporters can join with cyclists for worship and fellowship. The tour wraps up Sept. 4. For more information, visit [www.seatosea.org](http://www.seatosea.org). — AM



## Churches included in Heritage bill

by Amy MacLachlan

AMENDMENTS to the Ontario Heritage Act were passed in April that will offer comprehensive protection to buildings waiting for heritage status. Concerns of churches — including how they will pay for aging buildings that are designated — did not affect Bill 60, but a consultation process will be set up to address concerns. “The communication lines are open and the minister has every intention of developing guidelines that are in line with their concerns,” said Carole Drouin, communications representative at the Ministry of Culture.

The working group will include churches, universities, hospitals and school boards. The government had failed to include churches originally. “The amendment tried to fix a very serious problem and the political parties were aware of that,” said Archdeacon Harry Huskins, an Anglican church representative. We have every trust that the government will carry through with its assurances to us.” The *Record* reported on the controversial bill in May.

The discussions led to the stalling of the bill’s third reading — something that angered heritage groups and pitted them against churches. Supporters of the bill argued that heritage buildings are landmarks of history and culture and the community deserves a say in what happens to them. Relations have tempered now, as both sides gain a better understanding of what the other is asking. Catherine Nasmith, an architect and vice president of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, is “just delighted” to see the bill pass, and hopes churches and others keep pressing for financial support.

Nasmith said most countries with heritage laws provide funding to property owners. “I think it’s a scandal that churches are often forced to finance themselves by tearing down their buildings,” said Nasmith.



## Renovated and re-dedicated

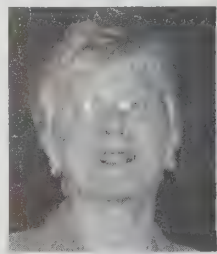
St. Andrew’s, Brampton, Ont., is the oldest church in the city and is already a designated heritage building. Thanks to a generous endowment from a long-time member, and the faithful giving of the congregation, the church that was built in 1885 has been lovingly restored, renewed and renovated. The changes were officially designated on April 24 at a special service. “When you receive a large gift, take it and make it even larger,” said Rev. Wes Denyer, quoting one of his favourite stewardship teachers, Kennon Callahan. “And that is indeed what we have done. We’re looking forward to the future. There are a lot of good things going on here.”

The renovations encompassed four main areas: the exterior walls and foundation, the kitchen, a new church sign and the vestry, which exposed original brickwork that had previously been covered by drywall. Extensive work was done to closely match the original Credit Valley stone of the building. In total, the project cost about \$280,000.

Speaking at the service was John Hutton, a Brampton city councillor and a member of the Brampton Heritage Board. He praised the work that was done, calling the building “a jewel” and said the church’s beauty and the preservation of that beauty has made the city and the heritage board proud. Elaine Moore, regional councillor and speaking on Mayor Susan Fennell’s behalf, reminded the congregation of the lega-

cy they are continuing by taking care of the historical site. “You have kept faith with your ancestors and the founders of this church that was their pride and joy, and a tangible tool of their faith,” she said. “St. Andrew’s is a priceless part of our heritage in this city.”

Moderator Rick Fee could not attend but sent along his best wishes and congratulations. The national church sent along another representative in Annemarie Klassen,



Annemarie Klassen

associate secretary of stewardship and education for mission. She said the refurbished building speaks to the congregation’s sense of ministry to the community and beyond. She called St. Andrew’s “a shining light” of the national church, and saw the renovation as a profound statement of faith. “You understand the need to be actively involved in the community,” she said, referring in part to the church’s food cupboard that hands out 7,000 food packages every year and serves 125 to 150 people each week.

“This beautiful building will support your life as a congregation, so you will be able to continue St. Andrew’s heritage to be faithful to God’s call.”

Elizabeth Giesbrecht, a member and the dedication coordinator, called the project “a heritage building success story.” — AM

## A rainbow of faith traditions support same-sex marriage

A MULTI-FAITH COALITION held a news conference in April to voice its support of same-sex civil marriage. "It is essential that politicians recognize the diversity of views that exist within faith communities," said the Religious Coalition for Equal Marriage Rights, which includes Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Quakers, Sikhs and Unitarians. Presbyterians are not part of this group.

The conference dovetailed with several multi-faith rallies held across Canada to support Bill C-38. "We want to dispel the myth that if you are a person of faith, you must be opposed to same-sex marriage," said Richard Chambers of the United Church of Canada.

Coalition members believe the issue is one of human rights, and that same-sex marriage should be available to all. However, they fully support the right of faith communities to refuse to perform same-sex marriages.

Freedom of religion cannot come at the cost of limiting the rights of other groups," said Tarek Fatah of the Muslim Canadian Congress. — AM



## Record welcomes new art director

SAMANTHA EDWARDS has joined the *Record* as its new art director. She brings more than 12 years experience in editorial design, and has worked for Rogers Publishing designing advertising supplements and promotions for *Today's Parent*, *Chatelaine* and *Canadian Business*. She lives in Don Mills with her husband and two children, and looks forward to sharing her ideas with the *Record*.

## speaking up

### The Presbytery Meeting

by Carol Smith

The mood at the Presbytery meeting is a mixture of anxiety, confusion, and suspicion.

Attempts at jocularity have little effect on the proceedings. One or two offer weak smiles in response.

Cheeks aglow, a woman stands to report on unlikely love in all the wrong places. Faint hope stirs in the pews.

A booming voice praises the institution. The compliments wedge themselves into the situation, like a woman attempting to squeeze her feet into shoes two sizes too small.

On the stage, positions are assumed. (The missionary position is favoured)

A thin civility brackets the opinions. Screams have long since been deemed uncivilized. It has not been announced, but permission to speak has secretly been denied.

Principalities and powers suck the movement  
Backward,  
Downward.

The votes are cast.  
Some win, some lose.  
All go home empty-hearted.

Rev. Carol Smith is on the appendix of the roll in the Montreal Presbytery.

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of the *Presbyterian Record* but of the author's.



### tolerance

by Fred Mundle

tolerance rejects  
the Saviour sent  
to die upon the cross

tolerance denies  
all that he meant  
so all he said is loss

tolerance decries  
the age old cross  
it so misses the point

tolerance burns  
the blood-stained wood  
now time is out of joint

tolerance calls  
our Christ to bless  
unholy ways, unrighteousness

crucify him  
tolerance cries  
just one more time before our eyes

tolerance is a cross in ashes

Frederick Mundle is a Christian writer and broadcaster. He lives in New Brunswick.



# people & places

George Player gave 40 years of faithful service to St. Andrew's, Cardigan, P.E.I., as the church treasurer. Dennis Webster, left, gives Mr. Player a small token of the congregation's inauditable esteem.



Sixty-eight per cent of Record readers are 65 years of age or older. And, then there's Douglas Brodie, year old son of Margaret Moncrieff and Steve Brodie of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.



A feast, some flowers and a farewell for Rev. John Yoos, and his wife Harla. Mr. Yoos served St. Andrew's, Valley Centre and Zion in the Central Alberta Presbytery for 11 years. The painting is based on Lamentations 3:23, "They are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness."



Rev. William Baird, and his wife Betty, celebrated a century – 50 years as a couple, and another 50 for him as a minister. Currently, he is interim moderator and interim minister at St. Andrew's, Lakefield, Ont.

**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [record@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:record@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.

These young people, at Brant Hills Presbyterian, Burlington, Ont., are on FYRE. The Friday Youth Reaching Everyone group raised \$1,200 for Habitat for Humanity. Happy to accept the cheque on behalf of the international agency was chair Susan Goetz. The youth are: Kelsey, Andrew, Matt, Chantelle and Jennifer.



Its been 60 years since Alva and Lou MacFarlane first walked under the wedding bower, and they're still at it. St. Andrew's, Ajax, Ont., where they are long serving and faithful members, held a reception in February.



Jack O. Swalm has been an elder for half a century at St. Pauls, Duntroon, Ont., and Emmanuel, Nottawa, Ont. Fifty years of session meetings: if that isn't faithful service...

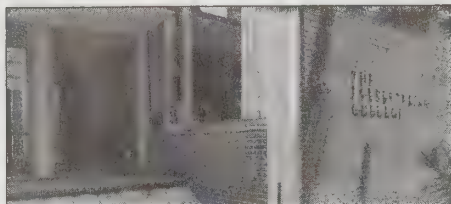


People and Places usually announces retiring elders, so this is very very welcomed news: Gloucester, Ottawa, recently inducted seven new elders: from left, Greg Jahn, Joan Born Flett, Vivian Reid-Hibbert, Joseph Ayafor, Olive O'May, Marian Robinson and Janet Warring.





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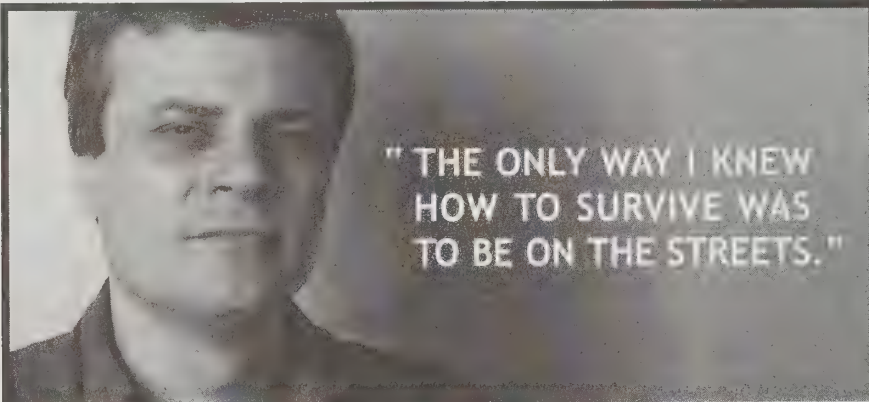
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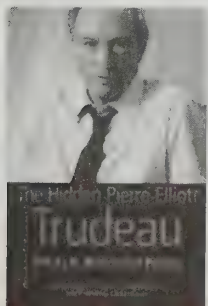


# Summer Reads

Inspirations for longing hearts

## 'A committed Christian, a convinced Catholic'

*Pierre Trudeau's deepest secret* | BY WALTER MACLEAN



**The Hidden Pierre Elliott Trudeau: The Faith Behind the Politics**  
John English, Richard Gwyn and Whitney Lackenbauer, eds.  
*Novalis*

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, one of Canada's most controversial and celebrated Prime Ministers, was known for everything from his formidable intelli-

gence to his sex appeal, yet one of the most profound influences on his life — his Roman Catholic education, faith and spirituality — remained a near secret until the time of the tragic death of his son Michel in a skiing accident and his own death.

This intensely personal side of his life was the subject of a unique three-day conference in May 2003 hosted by St. Jerome's University, University of Waterloo. This book presents a slightly edited version of the presentations and discussions during the conference.

Former Prime Minister John Turner told the conference



## Summer Reads

*"I naturally asked myself questions about the truth of all this and about the meaning of freedom, predestination and liberty of choice and so on. But to have asked questions of yourself about it, I think is not too important. Let's say that I remained – I remain – a believer"* – TRUDEAU

luncheon, "Pierre was a committed Christian, a convinced Catholic, although he did not wear it on his sleeve. He had an ecumenical view of the Christian faith, fully supported Christian unity, and was multicultural in his view of the country. He felt that politics had to reach out to the wider good, the common good."

Professor John English, the official biographer, notes that although Trudeau rarely spoke about his faith, and was often critical of the church hierarchy, "his Catholicism was the prism through which he looked at the world." And, according to St. Jerome's President Michael Higgins, Trudeau's faith was a "complex thing formed by the Jesuits (a strong sense of discipline), the Dominicans (an intellectual approach combined with action) and the Benedictines (contemplation), as well as by a Catholic philosophical perspective known as personalism, that emphasized the individual's personal responsibility to take action to improve the world."

*The Globe and Mail's* Michael Valpy said "the things about Pierre Trudeau that touched Canadians most deeply were things bound to his spirituality – his affinity with Nature, for example, and the ideas he took from Christian personalism...the dignity of the individual, the will to human solidarity. These matters of Mr. Trudeau's soul bound him to what we know are Canadians' deep mythological attachments to the beauty of their land, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, collective equity, fairness, justice. Canadians always knew that Mr. Trudeau had more on his mind than political unity. Now they know what, and where it came from."

The conference also explored the co-existence of religion and politics in Canada. The organizers noted that "religion has always played a vital part in Canadian life, and there has been no shortage of MP's who came to the House of Commons straight from the pulpit. Yet Canadians, and especially the media, have shied away from openly mixing religion and politics."

Long-time Trudeau Liberal colleague and confidante Allan MacEachen suggests that "precisely because religion matters so much in Canada, potentially dividing English and French, we had to privatize faith in order to survive as a nation. Nobody was more aware of this than Trudeau." Author Stephen Clarkson sees Trudeau as perhaps our most multiculturally sensitive prime minister: "He saw Canada as a society in which no group could be allowed to impose their beliefs on others. In this, he believed that Canada could serve as model for the world."

*The Hidden Pierre Trudeau* enables the reader to see the future prime minister in his native, provincial, French Catholic setting. With the '60s came dramatic change. In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution replaced the priest-ridden past with a vibrant, modern, notably secular society. In Ottawa, the newly self-confident Canadian state, celebrating its 100th year of Confederation,

quickly found a place for the dynamic, stylish intellectual from Montreal. An observant Catholic, Trudeau moved with the times and respected the general will of the governed.

As executive director of the Manitoba Centennial of 1970 I encountered Trudeau and then again as an MP sitting across the floor of the House of Commons from 1979 through 1984. I was aware that he attended mass regularly. He did not, however, express a false dualism. There was seamlessness about him. His behaviour did not change – irritating as that could often be. For example, he was not prepared to write laws that excluded people I could identify with. Allan MacEachen, reflected on the years he had spent with Trudeau in the Liberal party, in the Caucus, in Cabinet, in Parliament: "In all of our time together, and in all of the complex and tense decisions we shared, I never recall him mentioning his Christian faith. It never occurred to me, however, that the perspective and judgment he brought to bear was not influenced by his faith".

I was pleased to participate in the conference and to chair the Panel, Faith And Public Life: Personal Experiences. For Presbyterians wrestling with faith and action, and seeking to understand present-day Canada, here is a book – a conference report – worth reading.

The Hon. Rev. Walter MacLean was the first minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to serve in Parliament and as a Cabinet minister. He was an M.P. from 1979 to 1993. He is minister-in-association at Knox, Waterloo, Ont

## To All Young Parents

by Nicole Foucault

I know that flowers fade  
So smell their perfume more often.  
I know that kids grow up quickly  
So enjoy yours now.  
I know that many animal species are disappearing  
So admire and help them.  
I know that your job is a life-time commitment  
So take more days off.  
I know that reading is a treasure  
So frequent your local library.  
I know that the earth's resources are dwindling  
So save and recycle.  
I know that love is irreplaceable  
So love, love, love!

Nicole Foucault lives in Gatineau, Quebec.

# From heights of love to depths of misery

*Determining the substance of spiritual guidance* | BY HARRIS ATHANASIADIS

**At the edge of our longing: Unspoken hunger for sacredness and depth**

James Conlon  
*Novalis*

**Is God Listening: Making Prayer a Part of Your Life**

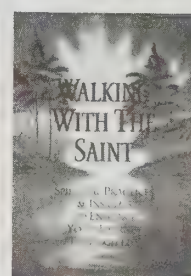
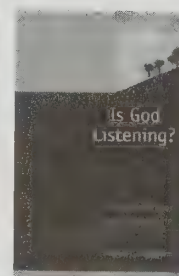
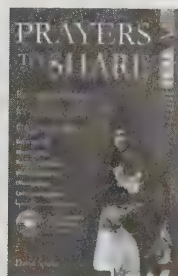
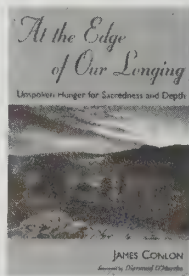
Andrew E. Steinmann  
*Concordia Publishing House*

**Prayers to Share: Responsive Prayers for each Sunday of the church year**

David Sparks  
*Wood Lake Books*

**Walking with the Saint: Spiritual Practices & Insights to enhance your Journey through life**

Mary Anne Ayer  
*Tenth Gate Publishing Corporation*



I have recently read two great books: Nikos Kazantzakis' *St. Francis*, which offers us the heights of love with its costly demands upon life, and Peter Balakian's best selling, *The Burning Tigris*, which in focussing on the Armenian genocide at the beginning of the 20th century offers disturbing testimony of the intensity of human evil and affliction. Based on my experience of these books, I have derived four criteria for measuring the substance and authenticity of spiritual guidance:

*Engage the truth of love:* The first and foremost criterion of a work on spirituality is whether it can engage and incorporate the truth of love as Jesus embodies and represents it most poignantly on a cross.

*Engage human evil:* Secondly, can it engage and incorporate human evil and affliction as reality and possibility for any one of us? What good is spiritual guidance if it cannot take us to the ecstatic heights of love or the agonizing depths of human misery? Loving God has to include all the exhilarating and demanding possibilities of love, which include loss and pain, perpetrated and suffered by so many we meet as brothers and sisters.

*State the image of God:* Following upon these experiential criteria, we are also confronted by our image of God as the one to whom we pray and the one through whom we meditate and receive guidance. Is our image of God too soft and sentimental or too hard, moralistic and judgmental? Is our God one whose power is that of coercion and control, or a costly love that seeks to renew, empower and heal from within in freedom and trust? We may want the universe to be controlled and planned, but does this view do justice to the suffering and chaos that strikes so many of us at random without thought to our morality or innocence? If God exercises power, it is, as the apostle defines it, a power perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12). Let us meditate on that for some spiritual enlightenment!

*Define the spiritual journey:* Fourth and finally, is the spiritual journey depicted as something we do (works righteousness) or a place of openness we cultivate so that God can work in us (divine grace)? Is our journey about achieving something

or emptying ourselves of clutter so that God can achieve something in and through us?

From my point of view, these four criteria are important, and they guided my reading of four books assigned to me for review. These books are quite diverse, representing different traditions and different concerns. But all of them are intended to inspire spiritual seekers on a journey toward fullness in God.

*Prayers to Share* is an excellent resource for worship preparation and prayer. However, on the basis of criteria one and two above, this resource could use the assistance of a writer like Ted Loder, a contemporary author of prayer books, to draw out the heights and depths of human ecstasy and anguish, grandeur and misery.

*Walking with the Saint* taught me a lot about the discipline of meditation, but it failed somewhat according to criteria three and four, offering a God too much in control, a life too clearly planned, and a tendency to work at being spiritual rather than recognizing it as a miracle of grace as it happens in surprising rather than predictable ways.

*Is God Listening?* is a good practical book on making prayer a regular part of your life, but it fails according to criteria one, two and three. Suffering and pain are too easily explained, God is depicted as too judgmental and vengeful, and consequently, the author's view of love (as the image of God as well as a demand upon us) is lacklustre at best.

Finally, *At the Edge of our Longing* was by far the most satisfying reading and meditation experience for me, but if there was any criticism I could offer it would be based on criterion two. The author gives us wonderful poetry when it comes to love in all its ecstasy, organic relatedness to all living things, and as responsibility in the world, but he moves with a kind of optimism that shortchanges the agonies, abysses and dark nights of the soul, which are also part of any spiritual journey worth taking.

Rev. Harris Athanasiadis is minister of St. Mark's, Toronto.



# Breathing to God's breath

*Transforming our inner lives to act in a world of violence and injustice*

BY DOUGLAS DUCHARME

**Christ Wisdom – Spiritual Practice in the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer,**

Christopher Page

Path Books



In his classic *A History of Christian Spirituality*, Urban T. Holmes writes

"to be spiritual means more than to be capable of receiving God into our lives. It means that we are called to know God... God communicates... and we can receive that communication. How we receive that communication is another question." In *Christ Wisdom: Spiritual Practice in the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer*, Christopher Page delves into those deep questions about how we know God, and how we are known by God and transformed.

It is sometimes the case that the simplest and most familiar texts contain the greatest depths. Christopher Page leads us to meditate on the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer a few words at a time. In some cases he approaches the same few words more than once, teasing out meaning and transformation each time. Page writes, "As spiritual seekers we do not need more information about our faith. We need the tools of living transformed and transforming lives." The words of Jesus "exist to open us to a deeper dimension of reality in order that we may be empowered to live the lives for which we were created." The results are often surprising insights and experiences of being in the presence of God, and of our own true selves. This is not prayer where we talk to God, so much as it is where we learn to listen, to adjust our breathing to God's breath.

For Page, the Beatitudes, "set out for us the attitudes and practices of the Christian life," while the Lord's Prayer, "builds upon those principles and guides us in living in communion with God."

The first half of the book deals with the series of aphorisms that constitute the beginning of the Sermon On The Mount in Matthew 5, aphorisms that are at times puzzling and even trite. Happy are the poor in spirit; those who mourn; who hunger and thirst; who are persecuted; reviled. Really?

Page leads us to reflect on the dominance of external circumstances on contemporary life, as opposed to the cultivation of the inner life that is our true self, where God dwells. He shows how the Beatitudes provide us with direction for spiritual practices that release us from ever changing and disappointing external circumstances. And, he roots us in a deepening of our inner life with God. At times this can

sound almost Buddhist in tone (though it is an authentic reflection of the early Christian mystics), such as when Page says, "To find what you long for you need only look within. What you seek abides with you and is in you," and later, "Stay with your struggle. Sit with the difficulties, doubts, and confusion... The deepest conundrums of the human condition are chisels working on the granite block of our lives."

In the second half of the book the Lord's Prayer is profoundly grounded in the real world and its stark political, economic and social realities. As a result, Page's language around familiar phrases such as 'your kingdom come', 'daily bread', 'forgive debts', and 'deliver us from evil', is reflective of a world filled with violence, injustice, suffering and hunger. Page points out that the transformed life Jesus asks of us will not seem to the world either practical or popular. In a timely comment about being peacemakers, for example, Page says "This may not be a popular message. It may not fill churches or sell lots of books. But Jesus was more committed to truth than to making people feel good or encouraging them to live a life of illusion and lies... In the ordinary realm of human affairs, the teachings of Jesus are not reasonable, practical, or even sensible."

However it may fit into a culture hungry for relationship and spirituality, at first blush this book is not very Presbyterian. And no wonder. Christopher Page is an Anglican priest living in B.C. who is trained in centering prayer. However, at a time when spiritual practices of many kinds are being recovered and shared across traditional denominational and religious lines, when best-selling authors such as Thomas Moore, Matthew Fox, Henri Nouwen, and Joan Chittister popularize integrated approaches to spirituality and wholeness, Presbyterians do well to open ourselves to alternative spiritual disciplines and practices as Page offers.

Calvin himself sought to re-connect theology and spirituality, or piety, which certain spiritual movements, such as the *devotio moderna*, had separated. He felt that the renewal of the church required a deep spiritual awakening, and that could only come about through relation of thinking combined with the inner life.

So maybe there is more in common between the spiritual legacy Page draws upon and the spiritual roots of the Presbyterian tradition, especially as that tradition enters the post-modern context of the 21st century, and as the church desperately seeks renewal, and as people search for meaningful ways to be in relationship with the holy, to be known by God.

Rev. Douglas DuCharme is an interim minister in the Presbytery of East Toronto.

# A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine

But Christians have always been afraid of laughter and humour | BY BARRY BALDWIN

## IS WITNESS UNCHRISTIAN?

Yes, according to the King James' Bible translation of Ephesians 5:4. "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

No, concluded theologian P.W. Van Der Horst in his *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*. Developing a point first made by Victorian biblical commentator T.K. Abbott, he persuasively argued that the Greek noun 'eutrapelia' - used only here in the New Testament - means not jesting but coarse or frivolous talk, a meaning now in the New Testament put out by the Canadian Bible Society, in which 'eutrapelia' is rendered "dirty words."

Van Der Horst summed up with relief, "The warning in Ephesians 5:4 need not be read as a denouncement of humour and wittiness in the church." Nevertheless, he worried, "One must admit humour is not recommended in the New Testament. From all the words meaning wit, joke, jest, laugh, etc., only two occur, and in a negative sense."

But we may breathe easily. In the first passage, 1 Corinthians 10:7, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play," wit is not interdicted, while the Epistle to James 4:9, "Let your laughter be turned to mourning," does not condemn it on principle.

The basic noun for laughter, 'gelos', occurs only in this James sentence, while the cognate verb 'gelao' surfaces only in the similar Luke 6:25, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep," again not condemning humour as such. The Greek words for smile and smiling never appear.

Long before Bergson and Freud attempted their ponderous investigations of humour, the Byzantine medical writer Meletius the Monk defined laughter as, "Agitated movement of the facial muscles or a broadening of the same muscles caused by the motion of internal organs." Samuel Johnson's famous dictionary defines laughter as, "An inarticulate expression of sudden merriment."

Pagans loved the laughter of their gods. But Christian writers have always been restrained: Basil ruled it out — Jesus, he claimed, never laughed. Jerome denounced it in a dozen tirades: laughter is ungodly and shall be punished on the Day of Judgement. Ambrose deemed jokes incompatible with ecclesiastical discipline and feared laughter was an impediment to chastity, a depressing view shared by such other theologians as Cyprian and Eusebius of Emesa. Monastic communities were especially austere, their rules stiffening from Pachomius' ban on laughing at prayer and mealtimes to the total prohibitions by Antony's disciple Ammonas and Ephraem the Syrian, "If monks ever laugh, it is the start of their souls' destruction."

One or two thinkers were less rigid. Athanasius permitted a soft smile to virgins; Gregory Nazianzenus the hint of one to orating monks. John Chrysostom attempted distinctions between licit and illicit laughter. His and Jerome's commentaries on Ephesians both focus on obscene humour, thus lending support to Van Der Horst's conclusions.

The abbot Esaias of Gaza was perhaps the most practical critic, advising in his Tenth Oration that if you laugh, at least keep your mouth shut and your teeth hidden; no toothy grins for him.

In our time, Umberto Eco has renewed this debate in *The Name Of The Rose*, counter pointing William of Baskerville's use of humour to undermine authority with monastery librarian Jorge of Burgos' revival of Basil's claim that Christ never laughed to justify both his ban on risibility and the burning of Aristotle's treatise on comedy.

The tight-lipped Fathers studiously ignore such Old Testament texts as Proverbs 17:22, "a cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine"; Psalm 126:2 "Then shall our mouth be filled with laughter"; and Job 8:21, "Till he fill thy mouth with laughing and thy lips with rejoicing".

Their conviction that Christ never laughed has been met head-on by Pastor Karl Schuessler, scriptwriter for *How God Makes Us Laugh* on the Canadian radio series *Testament*. Claiming there are at least 500 witticisms in the Old Testament and 200 in the New, Schuessler is eloquent in his support of theologian Karl Barth's "Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God."

I wonder if Barth knew about Bishop Sisinnius, the one and only ancient Christian famous for his jokes? Sisinnius never gets into the standard reference books, like the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Our glimpse of him is owed to a short chapter in the Ecclesiastical History of the 5th century Byzantine, Socrates.

Sisinnian humour is hardly thigh slapping: When asked why he, a bishop, bathed twice a day, Sisinnius replied, "Because I cannot bathe thrice." Quizzed by a rival bishop what he repented, he retorted, "That I came to see you." When another episcopal opponent proclaimed, "This city cannot have two bishops," the answer was, "Nor has it."

So, three cheers for Sisinnius, the church's first-known humorist, perhaps. He might have been pure corn but he is one early to have a public comic persona.

Barry Baldwin is Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Calgary and a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.



## Summer Reads

# Working through emotional pain

Unearthing buried evils leads to forgiveness | BY PATRICIA ELFORD

### Bountyfull Healing – A Guide for the Broken-Hearted

Larry Mackey

Novalis

### Healing Through Prayer – Health Practitioners Tell the Story

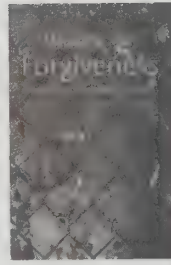
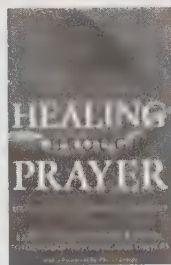
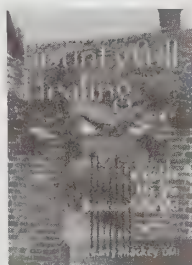
Larry Dossey & others

Anglican Book Centre

### From Fear to Freedom – Abused Wives Find Hope and Healing

Sheila A. Rogers

Path Books



### Winter Grief – A Personal Response to Grief

Donna J. Mann

Essence

### Struggling with Forgiveness – Stories from People & Communities

David Self

Path Books

The unhealthiest individuals are those who think there is no sin in them. Coming a close second are those who fear or know something is terribly wrong and can't or won't deal with it. Pity both, and pity those around them. The garbage becomes more deeply entrenched, seeping out to poison all systems: the person's own body and spirit, marriage, family, congregation, church, from generation to generation.

Of course, we believe, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" But there's only one perfect Person. Do we, or do we not, want to have God destroy that internal garbage heap that separates us from a joyful, well-lived life? Do we, or do we not, want to receive assurance of forgiveness? The Lord's Prayer, if reflected upon and not just monotonously chanted like dusty memory work, is a health-giving gift, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us."

Though not sufficient in themselves, some books can provide the encouraging voice of someone who's been there, really been there, and survived, even triumphed. The books listed above tell of persons working their way through pain towards healing. In every instance, there has been a counsellor or a group, a truly safe place in which to drain the pus and heal.

Donna's been there (*Winter Grief*). A retired Anglican priest, now a grief counsellor, she thought she'd coped with the accidental death, right beside her, of her toddler, Debbie. She tells of wrong decisions just after it happened: no visitation, quick, private service, no graveyard time. Everyone was trying to make it easy, so easy she had to find ways to simulate those important rituals much later. Donna speaks of unhelpful, theologically unsound things that were said, like "God needed

another angel". People, unable to bear listening to pain, told her not to dwell on it. It took 30 years of accumulative grief before she could tackle it thoroughly.

Too many persons have lived and died in agony because they've not been allowed to say to himself or herself or anyone else, "I'm a Christian, but I don't have it all together. I've been badly damaged. I need help."

For the person who does dare, too often the response has added injury. In *From Fear to Freedom* we meet Lily, a wife who was abused, experienced with her minister who wanted a sexual response and also Barbara who heard from the church's women: "You should love him (the abusive husband) more, so God will change him." Spousal abuse breaks the marriage contract. The injured person needs to be able to forgive. That does not require her to remain in the damaging situation.

In *Bountyfull Healing*, community founder, Fr. Larry Mackey, describes the personal stories of people who want help to heal. Most of the sufferers have been through 12-step programs in their hunger to be freed from pain, but this isn't enough.

One process he suggests involves drawing an image on chart paper. It is the person's life-story beginning with the present trauma. Guided, the broken person tells his own story. It works back, before his eyes, through to buried pain, the root of the problem, to the significant person and situation involved in the apparent murder of his spirit.

Meet Bill, who'd served 18 prison terms and was considered an incorrigible violent offender. No conventional behaviour therapy had worked. Assisted through the feelings in his life-story diagram, he was able to track down the pain, grief and guilt, which were the sources of his self-protective, uncontrollable rage. Finding new faith in God, dealing with the source of pain, he has begun to heal.

Buried evils must be recognized and forgiveness must occur before healing can begin. It's not because the evils are taken lightly. The victim says and means, something like this, "It was very wrong. However, regardless of whether you repent, or are still alive to repent, I forgive you. I wish you no further harm."

Rev. Patricia Elford is involved in the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew.

[www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

*From chaos  
to hope!*



**2004/2005  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Presbyterian World  
Service & Development**



# From chaos to hope!

*"If one member suffers, all suffer together;  
if one member is honoured, all rejoice together."*

I Corinthians 12:26

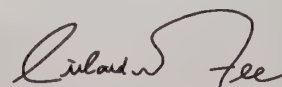
Our Christian faith continually calls us to take into account the other person, the other family, the other community, and the other nation. It is the call to suffer together, and rejoice together, that motivates the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development. Firmly grounded in Christ, we reach out into the world and think of others.

The past year has been an incredible year of sharing - both suffering and rejoicing. From the devastation of the tsunami on December 26, 2004, hurricanes in the Caribbean, the humanitarian crisis in Darfur Sudan, to the millions who live in life-threatening poverty every day, Presbyterians have reached out in compassion and justice.

This sharing has included the joys and accomplishments of our partners. We have shared through the food, water and essential supplies delivered to tsunami survivors days after the disaster. We have shared through the education, agriculture, and income generating projects that are helping people break cycles of poverty. We have shared through the projects that are helping people rebuild their lives after war, floods, hurricanes and other disasters. We are making a difference.

The response to the Towards a World without AIDS campaign launched at the 130th General Assembly has been incredible. Churches have risen to the challenge of raising funds and awareness about the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Many congregations found that their efforts have raised their profile in their own communities, as the community saw people's faith come alive through their actions.

The past year has been one of sharing suffering and celebrating joy. Let us continue to work together to make Christ's message come alive.

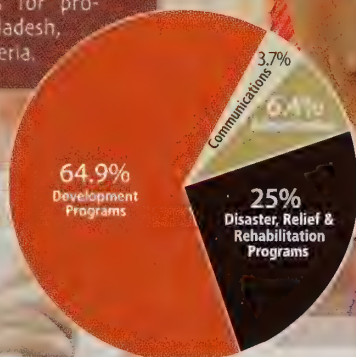


Richard Fee, Director



In 2004 congregations and individuals donated \$197,000 in cash and grain to PWS&D's account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. With contributions from other CFGB members and matching grants from CIDA, PWS&D was the lead agency for programs worth over four million dollars in North Korea, Malawi, Ukraine, Nicaragua, and Tanzania. PWS&D also contributed to other members for programs in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Liberia.

## 2004 EXPENDITURES



## Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

For the year ended December 31, 2004

| Revenues   | \$2004           | \$2003           |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Undesignated contributions                       | 1,183,556        | 1,026,346        |
| Undesignated bequests                            | 36,565           | 200,012          |
| Designated contributions – emergency relief      | 717,491          | 365,255          |
| Designated contributions – projects              | 515,697          | 578,728          |
| Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) | 398,000          | 398,000          |
| Government of the Province of Saskatchewan       | 11,549           | 7,537            |
| Other income                                     | 22,323           | 27,512           |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>2,885,181</b> | <b>2,603,390</b> |

| Expenditures                                | \$2004           | \$2003           |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Disaster, Relief and Rehabilitation         | 645,153          | 443,655          |
| CIDA/PWS&D Overseas Program                 | 530,340          | 537,922          |
| Presbyterian constituency funded projects   | 787,100          | 876,861          |
| Memberships, partnerships and coalitions    | 206,668          | 216,180          |
| Program support                             | 150,610          | 153,662          |
| Resource, communications, promotion, grants | 94,682           | 104,974          |
| Administration                              | 165,216          | 172,004          |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>2,579,769</b> | <b>2,505,258</b> |



The following pages highlight the impact PWS&D had in 2004-2005. PWS&D programs in disaster response, primary health care, basic education, skills training, micro-enterprise, food security and human rights and democracy are planned and implemented by strong churches and relief and development partners. Membership in Action by Churches Together (ACT) and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) enables PWS&D to respond to emergencies almost anywhere in the world.



## Kenya

More than 300 trainers of trainers and 10,000 community AIDS educators trained by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa are using their own time and resources to educate communities about HIV/AIDS. Shauri Yako Youth Support Centre is working with vulnerable children and youth in Nyeri area on child rights, education, HIV/AIDS prevention and environmental awareness.



## North Korea

PWS&D and other members of the CFGB sent 8,000 metric tonnes of wheat for vulnerable children and nursing and pregnant mothers. They also provided critical farm inputs (fertilizer, plastic sheeting, tractor tires) to help six farms in highly vulnerable counties increase their food production. It is estimated that for every \$20 invested, each farm will produce enough additional food to feed one person for a year.



## Sudan

The situation in Darfur, Sudan was classified as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Over one million people have been displaced in this conflict. ACT members are providing food and essential supplies (blankets, kitchen utensils, shelter material), educational materials, basic health services and access to potable water for the displaced.



## Ghana

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana continued to help women accused of witchcraft in northern Ghana. Project staff are working to eradicate misconceptions about witchcraft and improve the living conditions of women who have been banished from their communities and are living in Gambaga Outcast Home. In 2004, Mrs. Zaabia, the longest residing member of the home

was reunited with her family after 40 years of exile, giving hope to the women still living in the home. The PCG also provided agricultural support to disabled farmers and training in tailoring, weaving and shoemaking to both disabled and able youth.

While PWS&D raises funds separately from Presbyterian Sharing... these two arms of the Church work closely together. PWS&D sends funding for overseas partners' relief and development programs, while funds from Presbyterian Sharing... support FCC mission personnel assigned to overseas partners.



## Towards A World Without AIDS



Running marathons, staging concerts, selling meat pies and cds, hosting community dinners, house tours and fashion shows, and holding craft and bake sales, congregations raised \$250,000 by March 15, 2005 – and many congregations are still just beginning their efforts. These funds have helped the Church of North India provide education, care and alternative employment opportunities in communities with large numbers of commercial sex workers. Presbyterian churches in Malawi are providing voluntary counselling and testing, establishing orphan programs and initiating prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs in remote communities. Plans are also underway to fund new HIV/AIDS programs in Tanzania, Canada and Central America.



## Tsunami

Within hours of the tsunami, PWS&D was in contact with partners in the region to offer assistance. Immediate assistance included food, water, clothing, medicine and medical supplies, school, bed and hygiene kits, kerosene lanterns,

utensils for survivors and

mosquito coils and nets, soap, dishes, and boots and gloves to help with the clearing of debris. PWS&D partners will continue to make a difference by restoring livelihoods and rebuilding permanent housing, schools, and other community infrastructure. Boats and nets are letting people return to fishing. Temporary shelters move people out of schools and churches. Water projects are restoring clean water. Children are returning to school. Counseling programs are healing psychological scars.



By March 15, 2005, over \$1.2 million had been contributed by congregations and individuals for this appeal alone. Another \$750,000 of government matching funds has made almost two million dollars available for relief and rehabilitation through PWS&D.







## Nigeria

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria trained ministers and laypersons on HIV/AIDS education and care. They also successfully helped women become more active in expressing their opinions, challenging gender inequities and become involved in civic responsibilities. In Obingwa, one of the target regions, Mrs. Ojinka was the first woman in her district to be elected to the local government.

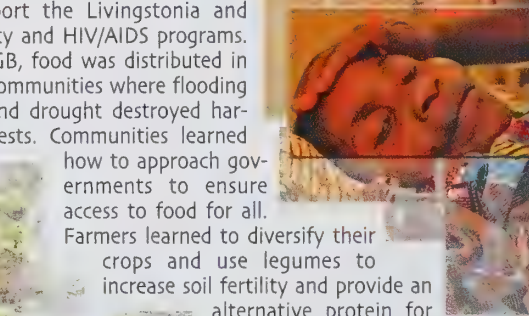
## Malawi

PWS&D continued to support the Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods' food security and HIV/AIDS programs. With the support of the CFGB, food was distributed in communities where flooding and drought destroyed harvests. Communities learned

how to approach governments to ensure access to food for all.

Farmers learned to diversify their crops and use legumes to increase soil fertility and provide an alternative protein for their diet. The Synods

supported AIDS orphans, provided care for people living with HIV and AIDS, and educated communities on HIV prevention. Latrines, shallow wells and boreholes were installed in the Bua District and communities learned how to maintain them.





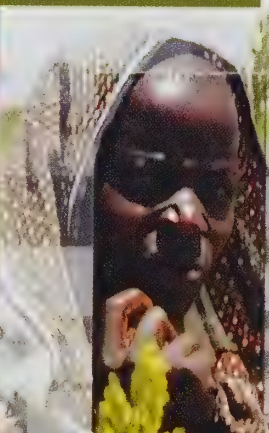
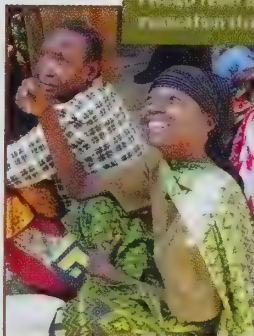
## Mozambique

PWS&D supported water and sanitation, primary health training, HIV/AIDS education and micro-credit programs in Mozambique through Cooperation Canada Mozambique.



The PWS&D Committee reviews and plans PWS&D relief and development programs, coordinate education strategies and refugee mobility.

## Tanzania



Shinyanga Tanzania continues to suffer from frequent food shortages due to severe drought. The Africa Inland Church of Tanzania (AICT) provided emergency food aid in Kishapu district, after two years of drought left people struggling to eat. Drought resistant sorghum seeds and training in organic farming techniques and seed selection and storage is helping increase food production in Kishapu and other areas susceptible to drought. AICT is also constructing rainwater tanks, digging shallow wells, and training communities in water source maintenance and hygiene.



## El Salvador

The Women's Research and Training Institute (IMU) helped small groups of women learn about human rights and civic participation to improve living conditions. Women are feeling stronger about their role in society, helping them overcome some of the daily challenges they face.



## India

Religious tensions in the Bhil region required the village health programs to maintain a low profile for awhile, but regular activities have resumed. Village health workers are promoting small-scale industries, home gardens and animal care as ways to improve health. The health work is coordinated with the government to provide access to medicine, immunization and supplements such as folic acid, and iron for pregnant women in remote communities.



In Tamil Nadu, the Institute for Development Education, Roofs for the Roofless and Madurai Non-Formal Education Center continued to empower women and help communities access government services and programs. Adult literacy programs, night tuition classes for children, vocational training and savings groups helped communities improve lives. Small industries, making incense, soap, spice and rice packages and other goods, helped improve incomes for vulnerable families.

Through ACT, PWS&D also provided potable water, drilled tube wells, and provided fodder for livestock in regions experiencing severe drought and responded to severe floods in the Assam region of India.



## Guatemala

The Fraternidad de Presbyteriales Mayas helped women set up small businesses raising pigs, chicken and cattle, growing vegetables and the spice cardamom, and doing embroidery. With their income the women are repaying the loans, feeding their

families, paying for school fees, and improving their businesses and houses. On the eastern coast, CEIDEC continued to help remote communities work together to improve life, this year focusing on establishing community gardens.

Matching funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) continue to extend the impact of donations to PWS&D.

## Caribbean Hurricanes

Four successive hurricanes wreaked havoc in the Caribbean in September 2004. The storms damaged homes, schools, hospitals, electricity, telephone and water and gas systems and other infrastructure. Through ACT, PWS&D provided food, water and shelter and restored sanitation, agriculture, education and income generating activities in Haiti, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica and Cuba.





## Ukraine

PWS&D helped the Hungarian Reformed Church in Ukraine restore farms damaged by flooding. Improved vegetable seeds, combined with training, are helping farmers make the transition to a free market system.



## Nicaragua

PWS&D continued to work with children and youth in vulnerable communities. CIVEMN offers quality education to children, youth and adults. In addition to formal education, training is also provided in sewing, hairdressing, tailoring, and typing. Organized activities in sports, dance, and music are giving vulnerable youth new opportunities. INPRHU is providing a shelter for victims of sexual abuse identified by outreach workers in the markets of Managua. The shelter helps restore their self-confidence and dignity and heal from the trauma of the abuse.

Soynica's health and nutrition educators helped families improve their nutrition, particularly pregnant women, mothers with newborns, and pre-school children. In 2004, PWS&D and CFGF started a multi-year commitment to Soynica's food security program in Northern Nicaragua. YMCA Nicaragua provided pregnant cows to families, first helping them protect their water and soil resources to prepare for the cow. The families return two calves back to the project to be passed on to other families.





## Kairos

PWS&D worked on debt cancellation, international financial reform, ecologically sustainable economic development, just trade practices, conflict resolution, peace building and protection of human rights through Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. Focus countries were Sudan, Cuba, Colombia, Mexico, Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor, India, Palestinian Territories and Iraq.

## More...

PWS&D also provided funds for

- Afghanistan rehabilitation
  - Bangladesh floods
  - BC forest fires
  - China floods
  - Internally displaced people in Colombia
- Democratic Republic of Congo rehabilitation
  - Ethiopia food security programs
  - Guyana floods
  - Haiti and Dominican Republic floods
    - Haiti civil unrest
  - India drought
    - India floods
    - Iran earthquake
    - Iraq rehabilitation
    - Liberia rehabilitation
    - Nicaragua flood and mudslide
    - Palestinian crisis
    - Taiwan typhoon



Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation supports two PWS&D projects in El Salvador and Ghana and also selected PWS&D as one of eight organizations to receive Saskatchewan funds for post-trauma rehabilitation work.



# Get Involved !



PWS&D programs do not happen without the support of individuals and congregations. Every year congregations get involved through emergency appeals, special projects, educational workshops and worship services. Our partners continually express thanks for our prayers remembering their work.

PWS&D supports Fair Trade Coffee and Maquila Solidarity Network as practical ways to support sustainable development through fair trade. PWS&D urges congregations to get involved in their campaigns.

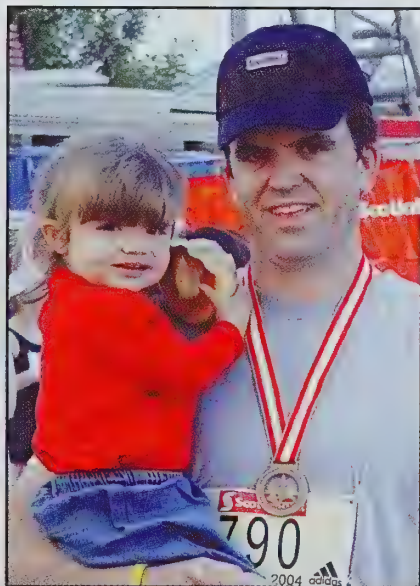


Canadian Foodgrains Bank growing projects helped provide food resources that PWS&D could use in disaster situations.



PWS&D staff & committee members continued to engage congregations by speaking on Sundays and at special events.

In 2004/05, The Presbyterian Church in Canada approved 33 refugee sponsorship cases. If all cases are successful, 50 new refugees will come to Canada from El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iraq, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. In the summer of 2004, then Minister of Citizenship & Immigration, The Honourable Judy Sgro, called on Canadian churches to stop offering sanctuary to refused refugee claimants. The churches pointed out that the real problem is that the refugee determination system does not allow for appeals, even if the refugee claimants are to be deported back to possible torture or death.



Exposure Tour Grants helped individuals and congregations learn first-hand about mission overseas. Recipients raise awareness about needs overseas and the work of the PWS&D when they return home.



PWS&D Grants empower local leaders and communities. Action by churches together and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for all of the pictures used in this annual report.



PWS&D Sunday is the first Sunday in February. Resources from PWS&D help congregations integrate the relief and development work into their worship service.





*"If one member suffers,  
all suffer together;  
if one member is honoured,  
all rejoice together."*

1 Corinthians 12:26

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## Building the Core

1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 3: 10 -17

by Jennifer Day

I believe help my unbelief through  
change hardship hope and grief  
I have known you and wandered  
away you found me and I am here  
to stay but my struggle lives from  
day to day

When this cloak of shame creeps  
up to injure my name I declare  
from your word and your will you  
testified I have freedom still  
and at the banquet my cup will  
be filled

Hallelujah for the Lord counts  
my days watching me growing  
takes my hand and he walks me  
in his ways

The excavations done through the  
night are more than painful but to  
fight them would be building walls  
that keep you far from me  
I want to meet you have you build  
me strong mold the right and rid  
me of the wrong

Is this what you're building  
you're building the core  
I will take what you've built on me  
and build on it more

Hallelujah for the Lord counts  
my days watching me growing  
takes my hand and he walks me  
in his ways

Jennifer Day is a singer-songwriter and  
a member of St. Andrew's, Islington,  
Toronto. This is taken from her debut  
album *Building the Core*.

## Solace



A Correspondence of Gardening,  
Friendship and Healing



By Diane Sims & Marla Fletcher

## Solace

by Diane Sims  
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- Mary Hynes, *Tapestry*, CBC Radio One

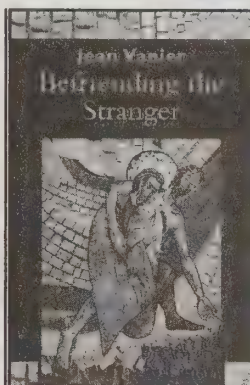
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book!

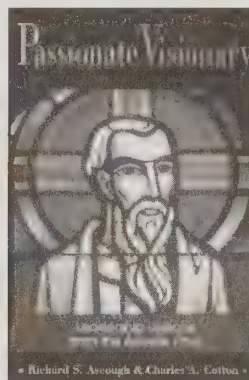


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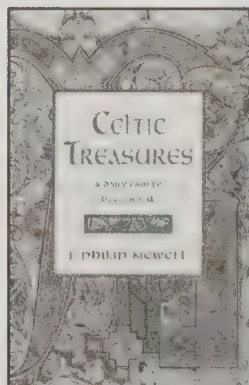


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## No Name Poem

by John Joseph Jack James

I feel the hand of evil clutch  
Upon my heart with its foul touch  
Jesus now I need you much  
Hear my cry

Don't let me be the devil's tool  
he'll make me be an empty fool  
And with his hate my actions rule  
And I will die

I have no strength to bear the trial  
I'm just a weak and empty child  
Crying, falling, all the while  
To You I fly

## The Cactus and the Rose

by John Joseph Jack James

In every living human,  
The Mighty Maker sows a little  
of His sweetness,  
A little of the Rose

To every living human, the evil  
devil goes  
and plants his plant the cactus,  
with hate this flower grows

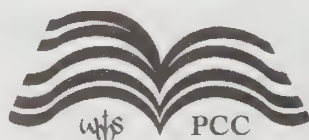
When life is lived and ended,  
one thing clearly shows  
If you've watered well the cactus,  
or with love have fed the Rose.

Jack James wrote these poems while  
in jail about 40 years ago. He lives in  
Sturgeon Falls, Ont.

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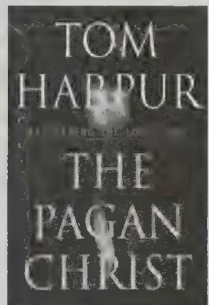
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# Taking back the story of Christ

*The re-mythologized Jesus matters, but not the way Tom Harpur argues*

BY BOB FARIS AND DOUGLAS DUCHARME



## **The Pagan Christ – Rediscovering the Lost Light**

Tom Harpur

Thomas Allen Publishers

There is, it seems, in popular culture a sense that when it comes to religion we have been cheated. The church has lied to us, has betrayed us, and has held the story of Jesus hostage. But, the story is a universal story; the story is ours. The church does not own it. Recently, books like *The Pagan Christ*, *The DaVinci Code* and others have brought that deeply held suspicion and conviction to the surface and have got people talking. These books and the many, many web sites that exist on this topic, offer a new way of experiencing good news that is despite the church and apart from it. For many (though by no means all) middle class, relatively wealthy (by world standards) North Americans, there is a strong sense of being oppressed by the church, and the possibility of ‘taking back the story’ from the church is attractive. It symbolizes breaking the church’s hold on spirituality.

*The Pagan Christ – Rediscovering the Lost Light* marks a huge shift in Harpur’s own faith journey. A once passionate evangelical professor at Wycliffe College in Toronto, he now argues that Jesus never existed. Beginning in the second century, the church sought to capture and control a story that it inherited from ancient sources, particularly from Egyptian mystery religions. In Harpur’s view, the story of Jesus is not history, but an archetypal myth.

(Curiously, Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code* also argues that the church co-opted the historical Jesus for its own paternalistic power grab. In his own way, Brown believes he is clarifying the true Christ.)

Joseph Campbell has said, “Myth is what never was, yet always is.” The debate about the Bible’s approach to fact has had a thorough airing over almost three centuries from the pioneer studies of Hermann Reimarus in the early 1700’s to the Jesus Seminar of recent years. This debate has sought to disentangle the Jesus of history from the layers of myth that have accumulated in scripture and over the centuries of Christian history. It has also led to wrestling with issues from the literal story of creation in six days, to the role and ordination of women, to same-sex orientation. Not a pretty picture. In moving in the opposite direction, Harpur offers a much more appealing path through the debate by re-mythologizing the whole story. There is no need to seek the historical Jesus, or the historical Moses, or David for that matter, because they never existed. What is important is to find in these

stories the spiritual truth, which links them to the universal myth, which can be found at the heart of all religion.

Yet, when Christianity has been spiritualized – severed from a historical connection to a Jesus who actually lived, died violently and who, Christians believe, defeated death by rising from it to proclaim newness of life – then it has been co-opted by the powerful to justify oppression and impoverishment. It suggests that Jesus didn’t mean it when he stood against authority, oppression and suffering in the here and now; that Christianity is all about the next life; that this evil

## **The New Testament credits the Nazarene whom Harpur denies existed with affirming a seminal insight: it is truth that makes us free, you and me**

world will pass away and we must not concern ourselves with the messy realities of injustice.

It is interesting to note that in impoverished communities in Latin America, Asia, and Africa the effort has in many cases been one of re-claiming the story from a spiritualized captivity of those in power and the religious leaders who blessed that oppressive and unjust power. For these people it is the *historicizing* of Jesus that is freeing.

In both cases it is about re-claiming the story.

All in all, this seems to be an important and worthwhile conversation to be having. Not one that is relegated to the fringes of polarized frenzy. Can thoughtful people find another path through the reception of Harpur’s book, and others? The New Testament credits the Nazarene whom Harpur denies existed with affirming a seminal insight: it is truth that makes us free, you and me. While the truth involves risk, often costly risks for today’s church, and the people within them, Jesus is also reported to have said, “do not be afraid”.

A group of us gathered for lunch at a Toronto eatery to talk about this book. For better or for worse, there was no one sitting at the next table. But we tried to imagine what the conversation might have been if this group of church people had engaged a group of non-church people on the common ground of *The Pagan Christ*. At the very least, we could say that some of us are reading that book too, and open to what is challenging there, but also to what can be challenged.

The roundtable that contributed to this review included the authors and Rev. Dr. Don Smith, Rev. Rodger Talbot, Rev. Bill Elliott, Sandra Demson, Rev. Geoff Johnston and Bob Elliott. They are involved in the East Toronto Presbytery.



## Summer Reads

# Portrait of a rumbustious contrarian

*Stanford Reid engaged a lonely battle against the 20th century church*

BY BARRY MACK

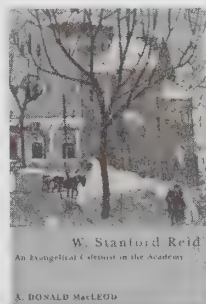
### W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy

A. Donald MacLeod

McGill-Queen's

My memories of Stanford Reid are not happy ones. As a young teenager at St. Paul's, Ottawa, I remember dismissing the anniversary speaker as tiresome and old. Ten years later, that impression was not remedied when I heard him holding forth at Knox College on the ordination of women, the WCC program to combat racism and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It is with some surprise, therefore, that I found Donald MacLeod's biography of the man to be a very good read (sic).

Obviously Stanford left his biographer no shortage of source material. The book provides a good sense of its subject and was written out of filial piety. While I have no private information, my sense is that Donald is the son Stanford never had. And the son's treatment of the father is sympathetic although not, at points, uncritical. He notes a certain snobbery and some of Reid's shortcomings as a scholar and as a writer. What emerges, however, is an engaging portrait of a rumbustious contrarian, provocateur, rebel and debater. As a 17th century confessional Calvinist (a real W.C.F. man as that tradition was mediated through 19th century Princeton of Charles Hodge and

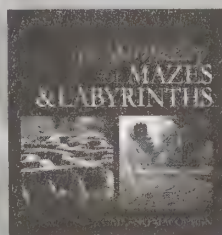


B.B. Warfield), he was a sometimes-entertaining dinosaur as he tromped around the secularized academy of 20th century Canada. We are left with the impression that Reid was at his best as a teacher and a graduate supervisor — not least because he provided students with something strong and solid to react to. Since none of his books received great critical acclaim or popular success, his main contribution to the academy, besides his graduate students, seems to have been the Scottish studies program at the University of Guelph, where he lived the second part of his professional career.

The book places Reid in his broad historical context. He was one of the fighting Reids from Kinnear's Mills in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Joseph Reid, Scots farmer, Sunday school superintendent and precentor at Reid's Church "on the Concession Road" begat eight children, including three Presbyterian ministers: Andrew, Allan, and William Dunn Reid — who was Stanford's father. All studied at Presbyterian College, Montreal in the 1890's under that formidable confessional Calvinist principal, D. H. McVicar — himself a disciple of Charles Hodge. This is the tradition in which Stanford was raised and it was strongly reinforced by his years as a student at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia in its heyday when Gresham Machen was still its animating force. And this was the perspective from which he engaged in his sometimes lonely battle against the 20th century church. One of the most endearing qualities of the man is that he had such good enemies. The accounts of his sparring with Ted Johnson and the denominational bureaucracy in Toronto over mission policy are fascinating, as are the accounts of his theological battles with Frank Beare.

Part of what makes the book interesting is that by the 1980's such a man has made his peace with the ordination of women and didn't want to make it the litmus test for renewal fellowship orthodoxy. Similarly, he came to regard *Living Faith* as an acceptable statement of Christian faith, "as good, if not better than most." This suggests that the 21st century may not be quite so fractious theologically for Canadian Presbyterians as the 20th century was. We may yet find some sane middle ground. Then we may be ready for the Great Revival and reversal of denominational fortunes for which Stanford Reid waited a lifetime.

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Rev. Barry Mack is minister of Longueuil, St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, Quebec.





# Remembering the tartans

*Scottish services draw crowds from across country*

*by Amy MacLachlan*

A special Scottish service has captivated two congregations on two sides of Ontario. St. Columba, Dalkeith, about an hour's drive from Ottawa, and Knox, St. Thomas, just minutes south of London, are home to an annual service celebrating the traditions of its Scottish founders. Kirkin' O' the Tartan has been going strong at St. Columba for 27 years, and at Knox for four. The special service commemorates the hardships their highland ancestors endured after their defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. "It's a time to remember our heritage and what our Scottish ancestors went through," said Joslyn MacGillivray, a member of St. Columba for 12 years.

Led by Charles Edward Stuart who was intent on taking the English throne, the clans' loss to the English resulted in the outlaw of all things Scottish. Kilts, the Gaelic language and bagpipes were strictly forbidden. Refusing to be stymied, the highland churches set aside one day each year for the blessing of the tartans. On that day, clansmen wore a piece of tartan under their coat, next to their heart, and the minister offered a prayer of thanks for the heritage tied to the cloth.

In modern times, the kirkin' service was originally revived by a Presbyterian church in Washington, D.C., at the beginning of the Second World War. The minister noted that many of the Scots in the United States had family overseas



who were fighting and dying in the war while the U.S. remained on the sidelines. It was an attempt to remind his countrymen of their roots.

Presbyterians first settled in St. Columba's area in 1794. In 1819, Rev. John McLaurin was the first Scottish minister and a small wooden church was erected shortly after. The first service in the present building, perched proudly atop Kirk Hill with its greying brick and towering spire, was held in 1865. Today, the congregation and the town itself remain distinctly Scottish and Irish.

Their annual service — this year on July 31 — is held on the Sunday following the Maxville Highland Games in North Glengarry — an event that attracts 20,000 people from across the country. St. Columba's service, which draws 400 people, features a guest minister, pipers and fiddlers playing traditional Scottish music, Gaelic singers and a procession and blessing of the tartans. During this time, those bearing the tartan flags — of which there were 24 last year — march around the church as their clan names are announced. "It's a great way to cap off a Scottish weekend!" said MacGillivray, a member of the event's advertising committee.





Since an average Sunday service draws about 22 parishioners, the annual event is an exciting time for the congregation and has become a distinct part of their identity. "We're the only church in Eastern Ontario that does this," said MacGillivray. "We're all very proud of it. It brings people to our church who would never come otherwise."

Nestled along the shores of Lake Erie in Elgin County, Knox' 2005 edition will be held on Sept. 25. The annual event has become a highlight for the community,

drawing visitors from across Canada, the U.S. and even Scotland and England. Family reunions are planned to coincide with the special day. The event has become an integral part of the congregation's outreach program. "A lot of new people come into our church because of it," said Linda Todd, kirkin' committee secretary. "People are often intimidated by the size of our church and merely by the fact that it is a church. But this event offers a non-threatening way to come inside. We hope they feel welcome and come back – and that's what's been happening."

St. Thomas is a distinctly Scottish town. The original organizing committee was saturated with Scottish blood. The committee's chairman, Tom Findlay, who was the driving force behind the event, is a native of Glasgow. Their hard work has paid off as the festivities keep growing and now attract more than 600 worshippers – something that organizers never dreamed of. Residents and guests don their clan tartan – with 39 banners in total – for a parade from the Elgin County Courthouse to the church. The parade is led by the pipes and drums of the London Firefighters Association Pipe Band.

The service features the largest pipe organ in southwestern Ontario, and a choir of 50 voices. The tartans are piped in and out of the sanctuary and the blessing features a laying of crossed swords on the Bible. The event holds special meaning for those who participate. "It's a way to combine a worship service with a thank you to everyone who went before us; for their faith and perseverance," said Todd. ☺



The annual Kirkin' O' the Tartan service at Knox, St. Thomas (this page) and at St. Columba, Dalkeith, Ont. (opposite page).

*Created by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.*

There are 20 hidden objects in the butterfly below. If you need any hints, please refer to the Bible passages to help you identify these communications from God.

## 1. Genesis 9:13

## 2. Exodus 3:2-4

### 3. Exodus 20:1-17

#### 4. Exodus 33:21-23

## 5. Exodus 40:1-3

6. Psalm 119:105

7. Jonah 1:17

## 8. Matthew 2:1-2

9. Mark 14:22

10. Mark 14:23-24

## 11. Luke 2:7

## 12. Luke 3:21-22

13. John 8:12

14. John 10:11

15. John 15:1

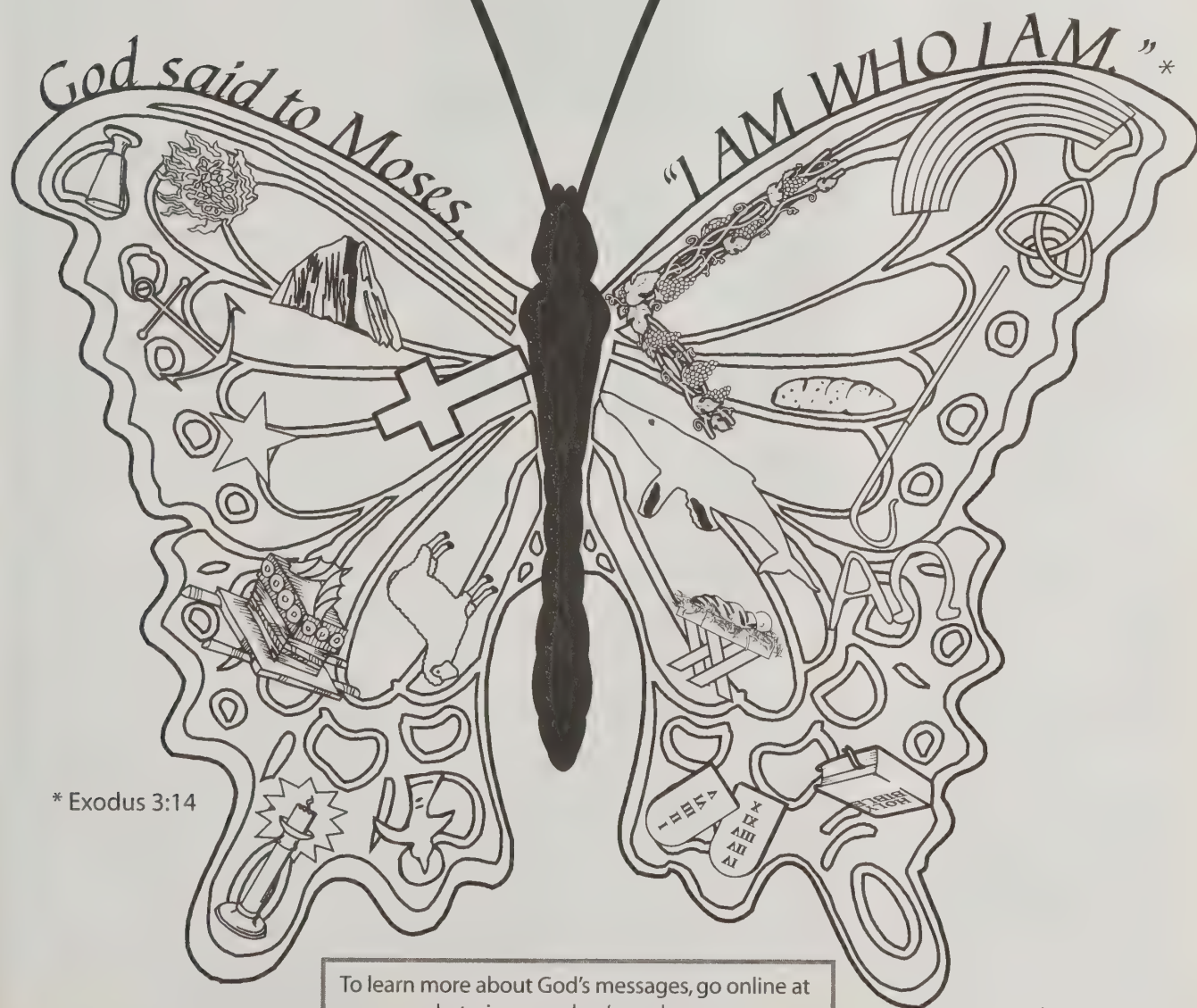
16. John 19:17

17. Hebrews 6:19-20

18. John 21:15-17

## 19.2 Corinthians 13:13

## 20. Revelation 22:13



\* Exodus 3:14

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Answers on page 41



# Forgiving those who trespass against us

*Harrowing story of a boy left for dead should be a moral tale for all*

The following is one of the most significant stories I have ever heard. If its moral and morals were followed to a lesser or greater extent by the world's governments, leaders, businesses and citizens the entire universe would change immediately, and change for the better.

It was 1974 in Miami, only a few days before Christmas. A 10-year-old boy named Chris Carrier stepped off the school bus, his head filled with thoughts of the presents he was going to receive from his parents. Or maybe, just maybe, from Santa Claus. As the small, trusting boy walked toward his home a man approached him.

"We're arranging a surprise for your dad," he said. "Could you come with me and help?"

Carrier loved his dad. He got into the truck with the nice man.

After a few minutes of driving, the man told Carrier he had to look at the map and check directions. Carrier nodded his head. And then, suddenly, Carrier was on his back and the man was on top of him, slashing at him with an ice-pick. The thrusts did not hurt as much as shock the boy. The same questions, drenched in terror, smashed into his mind. Why was this happening, what did the man want, where is my dad?

As suddenly as the attack started, it stopped. Silence. The man seemed almost apologetic, and then drove on until he and the fear-frozen child reached the Everglades.

"Get out of the truck and I'll call your father and tell him where you are," said the man. The boy got out, walked a few yards and then sat down on a rock.

The man followed, then turned away. As he did there was the loudest crack the boy had ever heard. And then blackness.



**The bullet entered his right temple and exited through his left, leaving him blind in one eye. Dazed and semi-conscious, this starving, bleeding little boy wandered around in the wilderness for almost a week**

Carrier had been shot through the head. The bullet entered his right temple and exited through his left, leaving him blind in one eye. Dazed and semi-conscious, this starving, bleeding little boy wandered around in the wilderness for almost a week. It was on Boxing Day that he was found, 120 kilometres from his home, and returned to his father.

It was, of course, a miracle that Carrier survived. The medics found that not only was the boy shot and stabbed but his body was also covered with cigarette burns. The police had a suspect but did not have proof. They believed that the abduction, torture and attempted murder was committed by someone who had worked as a nurse for Carrier's aged uncle but had been fired for drinking. The case was forgotten and Carrier learned to live with the injuries and restore his life.

The scene moves to 1996 and Carrier is a 32-year-old bookstore owner, mar-

ried with two children and very happy. Suddenly he receives a telephone call from a police officer who worked on the case two decades ago and has never quite let go. He explains that the man has been found and has confessed to his crimes on tape. He is in a North Miami Beach nursing home, blind and wasted. A pathetic wreck of a man.

His name is David McAllister and he is 77. He will not be charged because of the statute of limitations.

Carrier drives to the nursing home, gets out of his car and walks to the room of his persecutor. He stops. Then enters.

"I am the boy you tried to kill," he says. The man says nothing. Then a pause. Then this from Carrier: "I forgive you."

He visited David McAllister every day, cared for him and read him the Bible, right up until his death.

"I have everything, he has nothing," says Carrier. "I no longer see the man who hurt me, just a figure near death who has nobody."

So what are we to make of this? Simple. Justice is paramount, but in a world where so many of our policies and actions are infected by violence we need to hold up Carrier as a torch of inspiration. He certainly inspired me; and of all of the good and the great and the famous that I have interviewed, this soft-spoken man has made the greatest impression.

"As we forgive those who trespass against us." Not new, but still revolutionary. ✠

Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author, and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).

# A love letter to his son

*A father presents a personal honour roll*

Dear Son,

It seems like last Wednesday that you graduated from kindergarten with a Life Saver dangling from your cardboard hat. I congratulate you on waiting until the final prayer to crunch that candy. And I congratulate you today on an even greater achievement: graduation from high school.

Some of your peers accepted honours today and it's important that you learn to rejoice with those who rejoice. We Callaways were seldom singled out for academic awards, partly because we wanted to give the other students a chance, and partly because, as your grandfather once said, when they were handing out brains, we were at the buffet table loading up on ham. I made the Horror Roll twice, but never the Honour Roll. And so, in the absence of other honours, I wish to bestow upon you three distinguished awards, sponsored by companies you may recognize.

wonder how I can endure a game that rewards perseverance, courage, and devotion—with ulcers. The reason is simple. I love to be with my kids. We have peeled divots from dozens of golf courses together. And we have learned disconcerting things about our sinful nature. In fact, sometimes we've been so mad at ourselves that we've forgotten to hate our enemies. I love the way you put everything into each swing. And I don't



even more basic: That you would see the awfulness of sin and the greatness of God. In travelling to a few hundred speaking engagements with me, hauling my luggage through countless airports, there are few things you haven't seen Satan doing. But you've also seen God at work. Remember the men's retreat where a convicted murderer covered in tattoos hugged you hard? I suspect you do. "Follow God," he said, "and you won't end up like me. I never knew my father. Thank God for yours."

I've accepted a few honours in my day, but none comes close to the honour of being your dad. Twenty-five years ago today your mother and I walked the same aisle, graduating from the same school. We have found every promise of God to be true; every day He has been faithful. He will do the same for you.

I suspect you saw my tears today as you and two friends sang the closing song at the graduation ceremony. I

**Laughter is a holy gift from a loving God. Those who laugh the hardest don't laugh because life is easy, but because they have felt God's hand of mercy on their shoulders**

1. The Pulitzer My Leg Prize. Solomon once wrote that laughter is better than Prozac, and you have proved him right. You have invented hilarious faces, said things we still can't believe, and brought abundant humour into our home. You have put gum in my hair, soap in my toothbrush, and Kool-Aid in the showerhead. People ask where I get ideas for my books. They need look no further than you and your siblings. Never forget that one laugh is better than three tablespoons of bran flakes. Laughter is a holy gift from a loving God. Those who laugh the hardest don't laugh because life is easy, but because they have felt God's hand of mercy on their shoulders.

2. The Callaway Golf Award. People

be grudge the fact you are now hitting it farther than me. This world won't be a better place until kids are an improvement on their parents, so go ahead and hit it hard. Your generation is characterized by apathy. May that never be said of you. Keep lunging at life and whacking it dead centre.

3. The GAP Award (God Answers Prayer). Eighteen years ago your birth changed my life. I was humbled with a sense of my shortcomings. Unprepared for the intensity of my desire to see you walk with God. I began praying a simple prayer back then: that you would fall in love with Jesus and never get over it. I have seen Him answer in marvelous ways. Lately my prayer is

couldn't help myself. I cried because I love you. I cried because the words sum it up so well: "Your grace still amazes me, your love is still a mystery. Every day I get on my knees, your grace still amazes me."

Keep singing it. Keep living it. All the way Home.

With love, admiration and applause,  
Dad

PS: We hope you enjoy the cash, the books and the Life Savers. One of these days I'll return the gum, the soap and the Kool-Aid. When you least expect it. ☺

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**Jonathan Bruce Dennis**  
St. Andrew's, Picton, Ont.



**Hye Kyung Heo**  
Toronto Evangelical Church  
of the Word, Toronto



**Brian Alexander Hornibrook**  
St. Andrew's, Hespeler, Ont.



**Lina Kim**  
Knox, Agincourt, Ont.



**In Soo Kong**  
Erindale, Mississauga, Ont.  
and Master of Religious  
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**Tae-Wook Jonathan Kwon**  
First, Regina, Sask.  
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**Mathew John McKay**  
St. Andrew's,  
Saskatoon, Sask.



**Susan Elizabeth Moore**  
Caven, Exeter, Ont.



**Insub Paik**  
Vaughan Community,  
Vaughan, Ont.



**Janet Ryu**  
St. Giles Kingsway, Toronto



**Susan Suh**  
Westside, Mississauga, Ont.



**Mary Utvich-Spear**  
Drummond Hill,  
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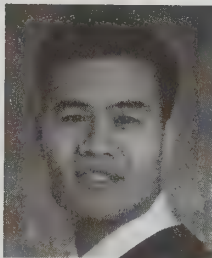


**Clarence John Mooney**  
St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont.

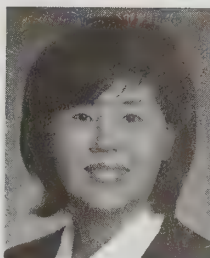
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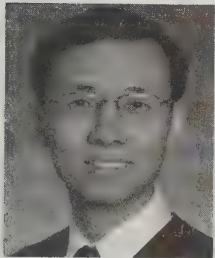
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**Edward Lee**  
Westside, Mississauga, Ont.



**Jeanie Soonrye Lee**  
Toronto Korean, Toronto



**Saecheon Lee**  
All People's Korean, Toronto



**Samuel Park**  
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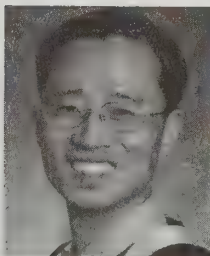


**Creola Mary Ellen Simpson**  
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Toronto Korean  
Presbyterian, Ont.



**Nelson Jack Duckworth,**  
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**Beth Marion Mattinson**  
Kings Presbyterian  
Church, New Minas, N.S.  
and Diploma in Ministry

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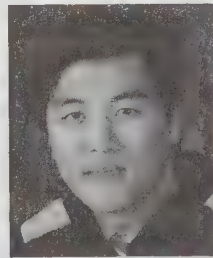
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Grace, Calgary, Alta.



**Robert Bowen**  
St. Paul's, Banff, Alta.



**Sanghyuk (Chuck) Moon**  
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Abbotsford, B.C.

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Surrey Korean, Surrey, B.C.



**Yong Kyoan (Philip) Kim**  
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Vancouver



**Il Ju Ra**  
Burnaby Korean,  
Vancouver



**Bruce Yeates**  
Knox, Guelph, Ont.

# Graduates 2005

## Charting the changes

*Our colleges aren't what they once were*

by Ted Siversn

When I graduated from Knox College in 1967 there was no dean, no female professors and almost no female students. Now at Vancouver School of Theology the academic dean/vice principal is a woman, an Anglican priest, a first-rate academic and administrator; about half the faculty are women and half the student body is female. That's just the beginning of the changes.

When I was studying theology all my professors were Presbyterian. At VST, the faculty consists of members of the United, Anglican, Lutheran and Presbyterian churches. The diversity within our walls makes both for interesting meetings and stimulating lectures.

The student body in my time was also all Presbyterian though we were just starting to see a few students from other seminaries and a few of us found our way to non-Presbyterian colleges for elective courses. Today we have a student body that consists of different cultures and races, a variety of denominations and some with no denomination at all. And now, our students are not just studying for ordination but also for degrees in education, spirituality, or theology because of interests other than ordination.

It is fair to say that the practical pervades theological courses and theological understanding is a significant dimension with the practical courses. Language study is not as strong as it once was with many saying, "Thank God," while others lament the loss of both Greek and Hebrew. In truth, a three year program, is not long enough to cover the essential subjects and theological education has to continue beyond those initial years in the seminary.

The style of teaching, which has always varied, has become far more participatory. Blackboards have turned green, flip charts are joined by over-

head projectors, slide projectors and now LCD projectors and DVD players. VST will soon have a wireless, network available in the offices, automated library and classrooms. Of course, typing and retyping essays has been displaced by the much more efficient cutting and pasting thanks to the computer. With helpful software an essay can be read, marked with comments and notations and then returned post-haste to the sender. (Though maybe post-haste is not a useful phrase in the electronic world.) Did I mention we also have on-line courses and distance education through e-mail courses? We are considering classes that will connect with students who will participate from away via web-cams and audio-streaming.

Most of our students are part time with some having significant travel distances. This makes it more difficult for us to maintain a sense of community, something that we continue to address with various special gatherings.

One item of bad news is that with denominational and government cutbacks, students must carry a much greater part of the cost of theological education. This is a problem for students, a problem for the colleges and a problem for the church. Bursary support is almost always necessary and always appreciated.

The good news is that God still calls faithful and industrious people to study, learn and grow as lay or ordained leaders in the church. Much has changed and will change and I wouldn't be surprised to see the dean in classy jeans. This does not change: God still remains as the one who calls us to follow. ✠

Rev. Dr. Ted Siversn is Director of Presbyterian Formation and sometimes teacher of this and that at Vancouver School of Theology.

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# Separating body and spirit

*Medical technology can support one; what about the other?*

by Andrew Faiz

**M**y father died horribly just before his 70th birthday. By then he had been ill with a form of Parkinson's disease for the better part of a decade. It's an insidious illness that slowly eats away the victim's motor ability. In the last year of his life, my dad was trapped in his own body. Everything that was him — his voice, his smile, his touch, his wit, his love, his knowledge — was locked in his flesh. It was his body, but it was not my father.

I can't imagine that my father, the person inside that deteriorating shell, was happy the last few years of his life. But he was alive. Arguably, in an earlier century, perhaps even an earlier decade, or in a country not as blessed with medical care as Canada, he would have died sooner. I think about that often.

It was horrible to watch him die so slowly. He was never, not really, on artificial means of support. He did have feeding tubes. And, he did get medication that aided his motor ability, until he reached that critical point where the illness could no longer be controlled. The official cause of death was pneumonia, and he died naturally; that is his body shut down on itself. It had begun that slide years earlier. He couldn't hold a cup of tea in his hands; then his legs forgot how to walk; later his throat didn't know how to swallow; and, finally his lungs filled with water.

Perhaps I misspoke earlier when I said it was not my father inside that body. I think about that a lot: who was my father? Was he the flesh or was he the voice? It is sometimes hard to distinguish the body from the person; but, for me, my father died at least a year before his body did. I can't imagine a greater loneliness: to have around him the people

that he loved and loved him, and not be able to hold them, to talk to them, to share with them a cigarette or a beer.

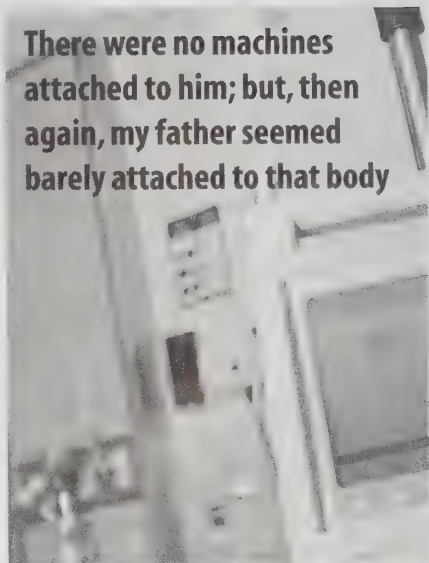
Which was my father? Where was the man I loved?

I don't know the answer to these questions; but I do know that it is one increasingly asked in our times. During the Terri Schiavo debate this past spring, this was the great question. Schiavo was a woman perpetually locked inside her body. Her parents wanted that body to continue its heartbeat; for her husband the body was not his wife. But, the body was alive because medical technology was capable of being her heart and her lungs.

Much was uttered during the heated public debate about death with dignity. I don't know what that phrase means; other than, it is a loaded ideological statement, the way life and choice are political statements in the abortion debate. Did my father die with dignity? I don't know — he died as naturally as one can who has spent more than a year in a medical institution. There were no machines attached to him; but, then again, my father seemed barely attached to that body.

I can't imagine, though I witnessed it, having to die like that. Take me quickly, please, and then shed few tears, have a big party, play lots of Bing Crosby and Bob Dylan. If what I believe is true, then I will be free from the physical bindings of this increasingly unreliable body. And yet, my body, my face, my voice are who I am. My body's shape, its abilities and its limitations have defined my character. I might well have had a different personality in a different body. This was equally true of my father, and Terri Schiavo, but, when I see either of their last bed-ridden photographs, their faces look like death masks, leathery skin stretched over the

**There were no machines attached to him; but, then again, my father seemed barely attached to that body**



skeleton and big teeth. They don't look like living people, because there is something in the spirit that is us that makes us look different. The way we look different, sometimes very different, when we are happy or sad.

The loud debate over Terri Schiavo was very disappointing because it was rife with the typical right-left nonsense. Medical technology forces us to think about very complicated and necessary definitions of life. What is life? For me, that was not my father, breathing through his death mask. I felt pain to realize that his own flesh abandoned this once proud man. Inside that thinking part that was him, that for me is the core of the spirit that is us, he must have wept every moment of every day. Perhaps I am wrong about that. I was never able to ask him. But, 15 years later, I still weep for him. ✂

Andrew Faiz is a journalist, producer, filmmaker and a keen critic of popular culture. He is also an elder at Gateway, Toronto. You can contact him at [afaiz@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:afaiz@presbyterianrecord.ca)

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Toronto, University Church; Rev. Bryn MacPhail, 15 Lambeth Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9A 2Y6; bryn@reformedtheology.ca.

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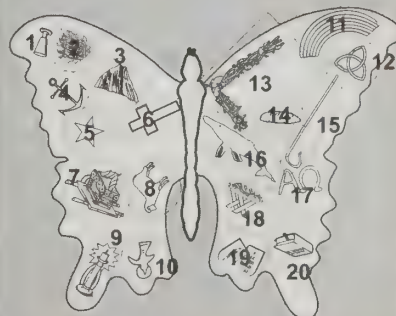
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 London, Korean Christian; Mr. Sam Lim, 530 Topping Lane, London, ON N6J 3M7; Bus: 519-472-0360; Home: 519-681-3828 [samlimca@yahoo.ca](mailto:samlimca@yahoo.ca);  
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 Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Interim Minister to begin April 2006; Rev. Terry Samuel, PO Box 587, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0; 519-542-2253; [terry.samuel@sympatico.ca](mailto:terry.samuel@sympatico.ca).  
 Sheffield, Knox; Kirkwall Presbyterian; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Don Donaghey; 905-627-3043; [don.donaghey@sympatico.ca](mailto:don.donaghey@sympatico.ca).

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#### Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Thompson, St. Andrew's; Rev. Matthew Brough, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB, R1A 1N1; 204-482-6425; [mcbrough@shaw.ca](mailto:mcbrough@shaw.ca).

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 Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; [standrews@sasktel.net](mailto:standrews@sasktel.net).

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#### Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Bassano, AB, Knox, Gem, Gem Church; Rev. D.V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; 403-526-3512; [dianebeach@shaw.ca](mailto:dianebeach@shaw.ca).

Director of Regional Ministries; Please check the synod website for details and contact person: [www.synodabnw.ca](http://www.synodabnw.ca).

Edmonton, Mill Woods; Rev. Richard Frotten, 13820-109A Ave., Edmonton, AB T5M 2K1; [frotten@shaw.ca](mailto:frotten@shaw.ca).

Medicine Hat, AB, Riverside; Rev. Dr. Bob Cruickshank, 504 2 St. SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0C6; 403-526-4542; [st\\_johns@telusplanet.net](mailto:st_johns@telusplanet.net).

#### Synod of British Columbia

Campbell River, BC, Trinity (vacant May 1st); Rev. D'Arcy Lade, 725 Aspen Rd., Comox, BC V9M 4E9;

250-339-2882; [cypc@shaw.ca](mailto:cypc@shaw.ca).

Port Alberni, BC, Knox; Rev. Don Lindsay, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; 250-668-0041; [standrewsdon@pacificcoast.net](mailto:standrewsdon@pacificcoast.net).

Prince George, BC, St. Giles Presbyterian Church (vacant June 1st); Interim Moderator John Wyminga, RR 5, PO Box 6, Niyas Site, Quesnel, BC V2J 3H9; 250-249-9611; [carpresb@uniserve.com](mailto:carpresb@uniserve.com).

Richmond, BC, Richmond Presbyterian Church; Rev. R.C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Court, Mission, BC V4S 1B8; 604-462-0858; [garvins@shaw.ca](mailto:garvins@shaw.ca)

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# Doing unto others

*Sharing our life in the Holy Spirit also demands sharing our wealth*

by David Webber



word Chilcotin and the name Puntzi Lake sounded Indian to my five-year-old ear. And the reputation for cold and the native sounding name attracted me in a strange kind of way, appealing to my passion for all things pioneer.

Thirty-five years later Linda and I and our family moved to the Cariboo-Chilcotin plateau and Puntzi Lake was just around the corner from us, a mere three hour drive across the plateau to the west. Puntzi Lake had ceased being a U.S. Air Force base when the Pine Line had ceded to Canadian control and then it had ceded to the pine squirrels about the time that Presi-

dent Ronald Regan had won the cold war with the Evil Empire. Besides, who needed an early warning radar system with Ronny's Star Wars missile defense program in the wings?

And so, Puntzi Lake is now just a Chilcotin lake again, with a handful of wonderful people who live around it enjoying the squirrels and the bitter cold. For some reason, official weather records are still kept for it. Whenever we have minus 40 degrees Celsius at Lac La Hache, Puntzi Lake records minus 50. Some things never change.

Puntzi Lake is noted for cold. It's always been that way. It's just like the Church of Jesus Christ is noted for the Holy Spirit. It's just always been that way. You just get used to it. So I was a little unsettled the other day when I was preparing for Pentecost by reading Acts

down memory lane. Puntzi Lake was etched on my memory since I was a snotty nosed kid. I lived with my paternal grandparents for eight years after my own parents had separated and divorced. It was the best thing that could have happened to me at five years of age; living with Grandpa and Grandma that is. They introduced me to all things cultural including listening to CBC radio. Every morning on CBC radio Grandpa's ritual was the cross-country weather report. It seemed to me that just about every morning there was this place called Puntzi Lake that reported in as the coldest spot in the province. I imagined it must be a place just a little bit north of the polar ice cap but Grandpa told me it was a U.S. Air Force Base up in the Chilcotin region of central British Columbia. The

**I**t sure is awful darn cold!" exclaimed Linda as she opened the door of our little travel trailer.

"Yep, ya got that right." The lady who came around to the remote mountain campsite to care for the campers and toilets was dressed in polar fleece and a frozen smile. "I live at the north end of the lake and the wind from the lake drives right through my cabin. I was down to Puntzi Lake this morning to check the campsite there and the weather station recorded a low of minus one celsius. Apparently it was the coldest reporting weather station in Canada for today. It's hard to believe it's the first day of summer."

Linda and Campsite Kate continued to banter back and forth at the door to the travel trailer but typically, my mind had already taken a hard left, this time



2, that something very old and very new broke into the state of the familiar and turned my thinking right on its head.

The church, or at least the people who make it up, has always been noted for being filled with the Holy Spirit. I have always thought in terms of the church this way, and I have always thought of the church exhibiting certain Holy Spirit traits. In his epistles, some

initiated in baptism, nurtured around the Lord's table and most importantly, lived out through the sharing of wealth (Acts 2:40-47). From Luke's perspective this is what the on-fire Holy Spirit filled church was noted for.

Now what really challenges me here is this sharing of wealth thing. I am not very good at it and I seem to share the Spirit filled common life of the church with folks that are almost as bad at it as

famous response to the question concerning the greatest commandment, which He insisted was the hook on which the whole of the Law and the Prophets hung: "... you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18)

I take this as more than mere coincidence. According to the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke, on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit filled the

## **What the sign of the Holy Spirit's presence was, and what attracted people to the church was, a common life lived out in the redistribution of wealth in caring for the needy**

of these traits the Apostle Paul calls the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" ... things like wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation of tongues (1Cor. 12:8-11). Some of these traits Paul calls "the fruits of the Holy Spirit," things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal.5:22). And so when I think of the church or its people as being noted for being filled with the Holy Spirit, I am usually thinking of us exhibiting these particular gifts and fruits.

Lately I have been trying to recover from the Christian addiction of proof-texting. You might say at present I am a recovering proof-textaholic. This means I am trying to listen to the Bible totally within the particular book that I am reading. What I mean by this is, that when I am reading something written by the evangelist Luke, I don't drag the Apostle Paul into it, and vice versa. I try to listen to each biblical book all by itself, at least at first. This freedom from the text-proofing addiction has caused me to discover all kinds of old stuff that is completely new to me. Like in the book of Acts, chapter two, the birth narrative of the church of Jesus Christ and the filling of its people with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. From Luke's perspective, he writes about this very Jewish festival that they called the Feast of Weeks. The particular trait that the Spirit filled church of Jesus Christ was noted for was the shared common life. It was a shared common life that was gathered by the apostolic Word,

I am. Together we seem to want to focus on Paul's list of Holy Spirit traits, perhaps because his gifts of the Spirit are much more spectacular and his fruits of the Spirit are much more subjective, and both can be nicely privatized to fit the strict individualism of our western culture. And so when I read Luke saying that the Spirit filled church is noted for community and a radical and costly redistribution of wealth with those who have need, I nicely sidestep Luke's bit of biblical truth and substitute Paul's, which suits me better personally, fits me like a glove really. But there is something missing, at least it seems to me there is. How on earth can you have a shared common life if you don't share your wealth?

Someone once told me that the Christian writings of the Bible, what is usually termed New Testament, are authenticated by the way they fulfill the Hebrew scriptures of the Bible, what is usually termed Old Testament. With this in mind, the interesting thing with regards to Pentecost is that when I look at the ancient instructions for celebrating it in the Hebrew scriptures, those detailed instructions in Leviticus 19 and 23 conclude with: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 23:22). And when you read around these instructions for Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks or the Day of First Fruits as it is also called, you run headlong into the spot where Jesus lifted his

church of Christ, what the newborn church became noted for was Holy Spirit. What the sign of the Holy Spirit's presence was, and what attracted people to the church was, a common life lived out in the redistribution of wealth in caring for the needy. It is as if the God of both Testaments said, "See, here is my Pentecost Holy Spirit stamp on them as they fulfill the Torah and my Son's command." Luke tells us: "And all the believers lived in wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved." (Acts 2:44-47)

I think now I begin to understand the seeming preoccupation throughout the rest of the book of Acts and indeed all of the New Testament, with what is termed Jesus' royal command to love neighbour as self (see James 2:8; Rom.13:9; Gal.5:14) and the requirement to care for the poor (see Gal.2:10). It is the outward sign, the evidence of what we are noted for, the ongoing Pentecost miracle of being filled with God's Spirit. ☩

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Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

# Indefatigable historian gave us our story

*Mel Bailey left a deep imprint on the church and his hometown*

by John A. Johnston

**M**el Bailey walked the Great Wall of China; he dined in the banquet halls of such luminaries as the Archbishops of Oslo, Norway and Leningrad, Russia. Equally he brought cigarettes every Tuesday to a blind man in an Ancaster nursing home and spent long nights by the side of dying saints and sinners. A beloved husband and father who walked in pastures green and in the valley of the shadow. This is our Mel.

In the Book of Proverbs 22:6 is written, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Influenced by godly parents and four uncles who served as Presbyterian ministers, it was no fluke that he was baptized with the name Melville, legendary Scottish Presbyterian divine and defender of the faith.

Mel grew up in the shadow of historic Dundurn Castle, Hamilton, Ont., its lawns his childhood playground. He did not have the advantages of wealth or superior education, working as a delivery driver and clerk for Canadian Pacific Express on minimal salary, and possessing no academic degrees.

He was nourished morally and spiritually through his family, Erskine church and the Christian Endeavour Society, which led him as a mature man to recognize a Call to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. No small decision, with no bankroll, no Greek or Hebrew, no Arts letters behind his name, hitchhiking month after month to classes at Knox College, Toronto, and the discrimination he on occasion felt as a so-called special

student, ineligible to be awarded a theological degree.

Mel's call to the ministry coincided with the 1950s post-war expansion of the visible church and the decision of Presbytery to establish a new congregation in rapidly expanding suburbia around Upper James Street, Hamilton. There are those who remember him canvassing the neighbourhood, the first service in the old Masonic Hall, Mel cleaning and putting up

the chairs, with only a handful at first responding. Now look to the beautiful South Gate church and its fine congregation — Mel's pride and joy — the Church of Jesus Christ.

Also consider his contributions to the recording and publicizing of the history of his hometown. *The Hamil-*

*ton Spectator* called him the "grand old man of Hamilton history." Historians and scholars pay tribute to his far-sighted dream to produce the *Hamilton Dictionary of Biography*, where, as editor, four volumes have been produced and a fifth is being written at the present time. A rare feat — the only municipal dictionary that any city in Canada has produced. His annual gifts of time and money to charities large and small would put many of us to shame.

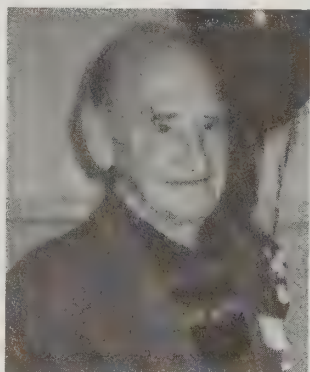
Almost 40 years ago, Mel was appointed to the General Assembly's Committee on History, and served at various times as a member up to the present, especially in the office of secretary. In 1975, the Presbyterian Church in Canada celebrated its centennial. Mel Bailey collected hundreds of photos depicting the denomination's life and mission and pub-

lished a most reader-friendly volume at his personal expense. To the publications of the Presbyterian History Committee, whether the four volumes of *Called to Witness* or the two volumes of *Gifts and Graces*, the stamp of Mel Bailey is deeply imprinted.

When Mel was first appointed to serve the church nationally, the Presbyterian Archives consisted of a few boxes on the top floor of the stacks at Knox College. Following in the footsteps of George Douglas, Neil Smith and John Moir, Mel was appointed in 1981 the official archivist, on recommendation of the Committee on History and decision of the Assembly. From 1980 to 1997 he would drive as a volunteer, to Toronto, accompanied for a time by his dear wife Janet, spend the day in the archives with Kim Arnold, cataloguing collections, answering research inquiries.

A few hours before the death of our brother, we were working all afternoon in his living room on revisions for a history of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario. Dr. Bailey's 31-year ministry at South Gate Church, his 45 books and articles, the plaques that adorn Hamilton's historic sites, the sermons delivered, addresses presented to the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, historical societies and organizations, the example he set for all of us — his personal piety, a listener, a gentle soul, a quick wit, a master of the one liner, always self-effacing, ready to step back and give to the others credit, a friend to all, we honour his memory. Now he lives on in each of us — a family touched by this great and good man, God's man for ever and ever. Amen. ✠

Rev. John A. Johnston is a retired minister in the Presbytery of Hamilton.





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## obituaries

**DAVIDSON, Rev. Kristian R.** Minister of  
Haney Presbyterian Church, Maple, B.C., died  
on January 7, 2005 in a tragic car accident. His  
wife Sheryl and nine year old daughter Lauren  
were also killed. Their 23-month-old daughter  
Katherine survived the crash.

Kris was born in Burnaby, B.C., on January  
6, 1970 but grew up in Calgary, Alta. He stud-  
ied at the Southern Alberta Institute of Tech-  
nology in Calgary, the University of Calgary  
and VST. Prior to studying for the ministry,  
Kris worked at the Canadian Red Cross Soci-  
ety and the Cancer Society. Among the most  
significant events in Kris' life was his coming  
to faith in Christ as a young adult. He was a  
humble man with a keen insight into Scrip-  
ture and a truly pastoral heart.

Kris was called to Haney Presbyterian  
Church where he was ordained and inducted  
on March 21, 2004. Kris and his family were  
well received, greatly loved and now sorely  
missed by Haney Church. As Kris lived out a  
gospel-shaped life, he did indeed become to  
many the blessing God intended him to be.

**HENDERSON, Margaret "Peggy"**, was born  
April 8, 1916 in Smithville, Ont. She was the  
second of four children born to Charles Hen-  
ry MacDonald and Ellen Martin. Four days  
prior to her birth, her father graduated from  
Knox College, Toronto, and in May took up his  
ministry in the Creemore, Dunedin and  
Fourth Line Nottawasaga pastoral charge. In  
1923, the family moved to Penetanguishene,  
Ont., and in 1925 to Lucknow, Ont.

Peggy completed her elementary and sec-  
ondary schooling in Lucknow. During this  
time, she took piano lessons. With the urging  
and support of her teacher, Mrs. Smith, Peggy  
acquired a position playing organ in the Luc-  
know Anglican Church and for four summers  
attended school in London, Ont., where she  
learned strings (cello) and clarinet and qual-  
ified to teach music in schools. She received  
her ATCM from the Royal Conservatory of  
Music, Toronto. In 1936, she became the first  
Music Supervisor in Lucknow and vicinity,  
teaching vocal music.

On September 23, 1941, Peggy married the  
Rev. W. A. "Bill" Henderson. During their 57  
years of marriage they served together in  
Hillsdale, Craighurst and Moonstone pastoral  
charge (1941-48), Knox, Walkerton (1948-61)

and Knox, Woodstock (1962-81). In 1981 they  
retired in Lucknow. Peggy was an honorary  
life member of the W.M.S. and among many  
things was known for her love of music,  
singing and generous hospitality.

Peggy is predeceased by her mother Ellen  
(1940), her father the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Mac-  
Donald (1951), past moderator of the General  
Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in  
Canada (1947), his second wife Katherine  
MacDougall (1997) and Peggy's husband the  
Rev. W. A. "Bill" Henderson (1999). She is sur-  
vived by a brother the Rev. Dr. Douglas Mac-  
Donald (Laura) and sisters Marion Mundell  
(Alvin) and Helen Brisbin (Jim); children, the  
Rev. John Henderson (Dorothy), Marg, Sandy  
(Patty) and Clara; grandchildren Sonya, Joel,  
Daniel, Emma, Kate, Graeme and Taylor and  
many nieces and nephews.

**JARVIN, Sheila**, faithful member of Memorial  
Church, Sylvan Lake, Alta., for over 60 years,  
church treasurer and record secretary for  
many years, passed away on November 19,  
2004 at 86 years.

**LINDMAN, John**, faithful, devoted, long time  
elder and member of Memorial Church, Syl-  
van Lake, Alta. passed away on February 7,  
2005 in his 85th year.

**MAIN, Harvie C.**, long time member of  
St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont., died March 21, 2005.  
Volunteered his time and efforts to Crieff and  
the former Camp Goforth.

**SCOTT, Mildred M.**, age 77, passed away  
peacefully at Stratford General Hospital with  
her family at her side on March 29, 2005. She  
was a long time faithful member of St. An-  
drew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford, Ont.  
Missed by five children, 17 grandchildren and  
12 great grandchildren.

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# Ministering to new ministers

*Beating back the burnout by starting well*

by John Borthwick

I have an idea. Let's prepare ministers of Word and Sacraments for pastoral ministry in this way: Three or four years of theological education, a few hours a week of placement in a congregation under the direction of the minister, and if they are motivated (or financially strapped) perhaps several opportunities for pulpit supply. Then let's release them to the church. Oh, wait a minute. That's what we do right now. And it seems to be working out alright. Or is it? Well, how would we really know? We've heard the statistics before: Ministry burnout is on the rise, especially in the first five years following ordination, turnover in ministry staff is high, and church conflict is rampant. Why? It must be the people in churches. It must be the colleges' fault. It must be the individuals we're calling into the ministry. Certainly, each of them have a role to play in the situation we find ourselves.

I have another idea. What if we designed something that might address at least one of the players, the newly ordained clergy, in a holistic way. What if after being ordained and inducted into one's first pastoral charge, you knew that the following summer you would be attending a program where you could talk about your first year in the parish as the minister. You would talk

with others like yourself who have just completed their first or maybe first few years of ministry. You'd listen to how similar their situation is to your own. You'd discover that you are not as alone as you thought you were. A new eagerness for learning (that perhaps had

and offer some suggestions on how to manage conflict when it occurs. Maybe you've discovered that each person in the congregation has a different understanding about your role as the minister. This program would help you to talk about how you see your role evolving as a ministering person and encourage you to engage in some personal reflection on ministerial identity.

Changes and transitions occurred the day you stepped through the door labelled Vestry or perhaps your own name appeared on that door, this program would help you to manage some of these transitions and provide strategies for coping and leading in changing times. Sometime during the program you'd have an opportunity to talk about the specific case study you'd brought that related to some aspect of your evolving role as a ministering person. Your group would have to listen to you and you'd have to listen to them as they offered their impressions, challenges, and encouragements for your reflection. What a blessing to have time set aside just for you.

And what a joy to know that you can do it all again the following year and the year after that. Three years devoted to you as you become the minister that God has called you to be.

It seems that there is nothing new under the sun. My idea is not new at all.

**We've heard the statistics before: Ministry burnout is on the rise, especially in the first five years following ordination, turnover in ministry staff is high, and church conflict is rampant**

waned by year three at college) would press you to seek practical tools to add to your growing pastoral toolbox. Perhaps you've already been through your first church fight. This program would offer you an opportunity to learn more about your own personal conflict style



Several years ago, a group of people gathered together and created just what I have described and called it Starting Well: First Years in Ministry. Denominational staff in the area of ministry and education from the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada worked hard to create a program that would address the needs of those who we are releasing on the church. With sponsorship and support from the Churches' Council for Theological Education, an ecumenical foundation and cooperation from Emmanuel and Knox Colleges, the program has completed its pilot project and is now into its second time around. So why not begin ministry by Starting Well. ☺

Rev. John Borthwick was a part of the initial design team for the Starting Well pilot project and a participant in the first three year unit of the program. He is currently serving as a co-minister at St. Andrew's, Guelph.

Check the Year of Education website at [www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education](http://www.presbyterian.ca/flames/education) for updates of ideas, resources and events.

After the first one or two years in parish leadership, individuals face a whole new set of questions focused especially around identity and practice. Within the context of this seminar, an opportunity is provided for participants to reflect on their own identified issues with peers and experienced leaders. Growth occurs both personally and in areas of skill development. Essentially this can be a significant introduction to a lifelong experience of continuing theological education.

— Bill Lord

Senior Consultant, Toronto School of Theology  
Co-leader of the first 3 Year Unit of Starting Well

In many respects I don't believe that my first year in ministry was much different than for most new ministers. It is a bit of a shock to move away from friends and classmates to a new place and congregation, removed from supports built up and relied on over the years. So it is no surprise that this first year in ministry was an intense time. My minutes and hours were spent with preparations for services, adapting to a new context, crisis visits, regular pastoral care, preparation for small group Bible Studies and youth programs, supporting existing programs and lay leaders and of course dealing with the personal upheaval of moving house and supporting my family as they adjusted to the new situation. Amid all this and much more, I found little time to reflect about ministry and how it was progressing or even to read new books for new insight.

I found Starting Well was a program that allowed me to step back and look at my ministry. It was a time to discuss how everything was going, to gain insight from others and to share stories successful and otherwise. The small group times allowed me to practice using new tools for analyzing situations and interact with insight from others around the table. The seminars provided relevant information and opportunities to interact with the material and use it immediately. The bibliographies were extremely helpful.

Perhaps I enjoyed the unstructured times most of all. In sharing laughter and faith, hope and struggles, joy and heartache I found renewal and refreshment, preparing me for the journey ahead.

— Rev. Jan Hazlett

Serving in her first charge as co-minister of St. Andrew's, Guelph

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# Superior's reach felt across the planet

*Northern Ontario is at the heart of local and international mission*

by Amy MacLachlan



**Mother's Day at First Church, Thunder Bay, Ont. Between February 2004 and January 2005 nine babies were born to the church family. The babies are of Caucasian, Korean, Burmese, Chinese and Sierra Leonian parentage, who came to Canada through the church's refugee sponsorship program. The moms and babies are with Rev. Mark McLennan.**

**F**our of the Presbytery of Superior's five churches are located in Thunder Bay (established in 1970 when the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William amalgamated), which was crowned a cultural capital of Canada in 2003. Rather than stifling each other's creativity, the closeness of the congregations fosters cooperation and new ideas. "We've been talking lately of pooling our mission resources," said Rev. Harold Hunt, minister at Lakeview, Thunder Bay "There's wonderful, open communication. You can say what you need to say. It's like opening a window, and letting in the fresh air."

Founded in 1925 by those who wished to remain Presbyterian after

church union, Lakeview is knee-deep in world mission endeavours. Serving about 154 households, they have raised money to fund projects in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, and have sent mission teams to build houses and churches in these countries. They also teamed with a United Church congregation to send mission workers to Rwanda.

The congregation works on the local front too, volunteering at a soup kitchen and fundraising for Haven House, a local youth hostel. "When people at the local soup kitchen know we're coming, they make a point to show up," said Hunt. "We've built a lot of great relationships there."

He is particularly pleased with how

the church's youth are responding to mission. A recent 30-hour famine attracted about 50 kids who raised \$2,000. They decided to donate the funds to Haven House. "They want to look out for the people who live right here. It's very exciting," said Hunt.

First Church, Thunder Bay, was also established in 1925. For its first five years the congregation held services in an old store until a new building was erected. The second-largest congregation in the presbytery has taken a different path in mission. Working with the Sleeping Giant Refugee Sponsorship Group, they have helped sponsor refugees from Sierra Leone, Burma and Thailand, to name a few. The refugees often become active in the congregation and are welcomed with

open arms into the community. "It's part of the congregation's identity and is a major outreach program," said First's minister, Mark McLennan. "We put a lot of time and effort into it."

The church has been heavily involved in this outreach for more than 20 years. Fifty-four refugees were sponsored last year (meaning the paperwork needed for a two to seven year process had been started), while 40 refugees were welcomed into Thunder Bay.

Many newcomers, like those from Somalia or Ethiopia, are often Muslim, so First does not become their church home. Others, like the large Burmese community, start out with the Presbyterians and then begin their



own worship services at First. About 25 to 40 Burmese refugees worship there on Sunday afternoons. Those who stay at First are warmly welcomed into their new church home. "We've become more intentional in integrating them into the congregation," said McLennan. "We recently held an African banquet and often have special Burmese meals. Many of them also sing in church — in their own languages and in English. Others are taking leadership positions."

Being sensitive to diverse backgrounds is nothing foreign to First, where the congregation has been a mix of cultures for many years, regardless of refugee additions. "We have a lot of people who are not historically Presbyterian. We're aware of that and make sure our service is user-friendly within a Presbyterian framework," said McLennan. "It's a new type of service for many, but they're very faithful and forgiving when it comes to things like that."

Established as a mission field in 1884, St. Andrew's, Thunder Bay, is also active in outreach. As the largest church in the presbytery, it serves about 550 households and is located in the downtown area of the city. Intent on responding to changing demographics, including homeless individuals or those struggling to make ends meet, St. Andrew's is currently raising money to help rebuild Shelter House, the local homeless shelter. The congregation is also actively involved in international mission projects, including fundraising to help build a church in El Salvador.

Lying about four hours north east of Thunder Bay is Greenstone, Ont., home to St. Andrew's. Serving about 100 households, their isolation from the rest of the presbytery doesn't stop the congregation from participating actively in the work of the church. Besides working with the Salvation Army year round, the church is the designated evacuation site for remote northern communities during the spring and summer forest fire months. It becomes the summer home for many people whose permanent home is in constant danger during the season, giving the congregation new opportunities for ministry. Currently, they're sharing

their building with a local Anglican congregation, whose church was damaged during a recent flood.

Although there are many reasons to be hopeful about the future, the presbytery is not without difficulties. Steeped in history dating back to the fur trade, when the shores of Lakes Superior and Huron served as the trading grounds for Ojibway natives and European settlers, Thunder Bay itself has seen better times. The region's main industries — forestry, pulp and paper and grain handling, are not what they once were, driving young families and students elsewhere to make a living.

**'We have a lot of people who are not historically Presbyterian. We're aware of that and make sure our service is user-friendly within a Presbyterian framework'**

The shrinking numbers have had a direct effect on the presbytery. Oliver Road Church, Thunder Bay, was established in 1952. Prior to this, it existed solely as a Sunday School. In 1979, it closed its doors completely. St. Andrew's, Atikokan, folded in 1997, and St. Andrew's, Fort Frances, closed up shop last year, due to dwindling numbers and fierce competition from the 18 other churches in a community of 4,500.

Calvin, Thunder Bay, is hoping to fend off such a fate by looking for ways to serve God and those around them. A small church, with about 37 households and no minister, they are struggling to attract newcomers and maintain the ones they already have. Still, these difficulties aren't the presbytery's focus. "It's just one of the challenges we have to live with," said Hunt. "But it doesn't drag us down."

He said although attracting new ministers may be a bit of a roadblock, once they come north, the presbytery has little trouble keeping them. "The problem is that unless you've been here, you don't know what you're missing," said Hunt. "The nature, the lifestyle, the recreational opportunities are just incredible. For sheer beauty, you can't beat it." ❧



## TSUNAMI UPDATE

### Life continues despite utter devastation

IN MID-APRIL I was privileged to be able to visit Chennai, India and the Andaman Islands to see the relief work being carried out by our partners in those two locations. In Hut Bay, Little Andaman (a seven hour boat trip from Port Blair on Great Andaman) we met with communities that have totally relocated their villages away from the seashore due to the tsunami. The devastation on this island was utter and stark. Almost every building within a kilometre of the shoreline was flattened. Concrete structures were no protection. In the main village 350 people died. The harbour was severely affected which has hampered relief supply delivery to these islands. Yes, the immediate relief period is complete and people are slowly emerging to contemplate the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. This will not be easy. Every nail, every bag of cement, every shovel-full of sand must be brought onto these islands by the ferry system.

The majority of the people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are Christian. Their expressed priority for reconstruction was first for a church, then a community centre, then personal homes. Life is returning to normal. I was asked to give the final blessing for a couple as they were married in a make-shift chapel constructed of corrugated iron. The ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada continues even as it reaches out to the people of the Andaman Islands.

—Rick Fee



# Ministry in the name of Jesus

*He establishes a standard of excellence*

**R**ecently I reconnected with a friend with whom I had lost contact. His family had gone through an emotional and traumatic loss. While he was raised Presbyterian, he explained that he has had little contact with the church outside of occasionally joining his parents when they attended special church services. As we spoke, he told me of the events surrounding his family's bereavement. Paramount in his narrative was the role that his parents' minister had played. He spoke with great appreciation and deep respect for this minister. He mentioned the words that were chosen, the time that was spent, and the dignity that was extended in the hospital, in the home and at the funeral services. It was obvious to me that he had received great strength from a Christian minister during a really tough time.

Ministry today is not easy. It is a calling. It is a gift and it is a grace. Was there a time when ministry was easy? Was there a time when all of the answers were there and people accepted everything a minister pronounced and then responded with zeal and dedication? Likely not! But today Christian ministry seems to be under scrutiny both from within and without.

During this past year I have had the privilege of sharing in ministry with many clergy — and lay people who equally live out their Christian calling through their vocations — in churches across Canada and overseas. I joined ministers at funerals remembering someone whose struggles in life were over. I stood on chancel steps before a couple about to be married. I walked hospital corridors and armed forces bases with chaplains as they made their rounds. I shared in the Lord's Supper remembrance with congregations and church organizations.

I joined youth group leaders as they



**Rick Fee visited tsunami survivors in Hut Bay, India, a village in the Andaman Islands that was completely destroyed. These women are now living in a temporary shelter.**

used vision and imagination to present meaningful and interesting programs for young Christians. With other ministers I stood beside hospital beds offering prayer and blessing for people very ill and in pain. I was welcomed to share platforms with long-serving overseas missionaries as their years of service were recognized. I have eaten and celebrated with Christian educators as they marked their vital and varied ministries. And it was always a pleasure and honour to join congregations and their ministers as they celebrated anniversaries of years of ministry in their communities.

Christian ministry is done in the name of Jesus. This does not remove it from the realm of reality or slot it into a mould which reeks of boredom, conventionality and routine. But it does establish a standard of excellence. In each of the situations where I was invited I was proud to join those who drew others forward into faith through actions and words that had

meaning, were relevant, contemporary and inspiring. To minister or be of service to someone is special. It is also a privilege. You meet people at the most critical points in their lives. All ministries should be handled with care. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is in ministry and I have seen its ministers reaching out in unique and relevant ways that bring glory to the One who sends us. It has been a privilege to serve as Moderator. ✠

## MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

### June 4

Elders' Institute, Dayspring, Edmonton


### June 5

St Paul's, Galahad 9:30 am

Killam Presbyterian 11:15 am

Opening of 131st Assembly 7:30 pm





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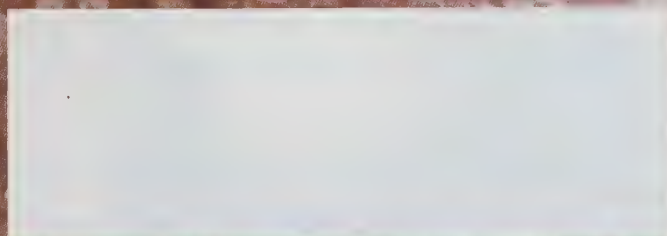
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## Assembly declares Aboriginal ministry a priority

**Finding Christ in jail**

**Mission in Haiti,  
Malawi and Pickering**

**Grow or die**





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# Listening leads to healing

In his award-winning essay on Celtic Christianity (*Presbyterian Record*, April 2004), Philip Newell writes about “listening within life for the beat of God’s presence.”

Listening is not something we do all that well in Western culture; talking and shouting is more typical. Heckling question periods in Parliament are the quintessential formalization of basketball players trashtalking.

Listening is difficult. It involves putting our own opinions to the side and taking in another’s viewpoint that could be radically different than our own.

Hook, crook and luck admitted few virtues in subjugating the humans who were on the continent prior to the Europeans. There is nothing more virtuous about the people who lived here prior to the 1500s than those who arrived from Europe: good and evil were as present in their lives as in ours today. They conquered brutally before being brutally conquered. Loss of life, language and culture has accompanied every such clash of humans.

But does such history justify itself? Are we really Roman Stoics for whom this is the work of fate? Surely we recognize the treatment of the aboriginal peoples was not the way we would hope to be treated.

Such judgments about the distant past are difficult because we cannot remove the lenses through which we judge the world today. But the treatment of people within our and our grandparents’ lifetime we can judge with reasonable clarity. And it fell terribly short.

In 1994, the Presbyterian Church offered an apology for its part in the running of Indian residential schools in Canada. There had been a dozen such Presbyterian schools. Following church union in 1925, there remained only two: Birtle, Manitoba, and Cecilia Jeffrey, in Kenora, Ont.

Two years ago, the church signed an agreement with Ottawa capping the church liability in lawsuits arising from the legacy of abuse in the schools at \$2.1 million. Money for the settlement came largely from some undesigned trust funds, so the church as a whole escaped any financial pain.

It would be a sad commentary if such pain were required to wake people up to the problems that existed at residential schools and their contribution to the bleak life too many of Canada’s aboriginal peoples face today.

This General Assembly certainly made an attempt: aboriginal issues permeated the week in debates about how to help heal the wounds of abuse, in worship, in banquet and to several talking circles held one evening.

Talking circles might be more appropriately called listening circles. Used by certain natives in their government, they are closer to a Friends Meeting than the cacophony of Parliament. Only one person speaks at a time, passing a rock or stick around the circle, and there can be considerable lengths of silence. Any decisions are based on consensus.

The creation of Canada has been a mix of good and evil politics, of war, rebellion, massacre, of aboriginal nations killing and being killed, even exterminated, such as the

## We are all guilty of talking too much. Few are guilty of listening too much

Beothuk in Newfoundland. Yet there are also many good stories of natives and non-natives helping one another, of Christians who built schools and hospitals.

But the evils of the past live on. While most of us live well, many aboriginal people still live in isolated communities. Of those who live in our cities, many have difficulty adjusting to non-native ways. This has nothing to do with intelligence.

As a result, there is pressure to retain certain aspects of culture, on the one hand, and join multicultural Western society. On the other hand, there is pressure from both natives and non-natives to remain almost isolated on remote reserves.

Easy answers are those most certain to fail, but as part of the dominant culture, surely we have the greater responsibility to work on solutions. We should not paint problems into the past as if they can and should be forgotten. Treaties barely a century old are often treated as if they should be observed only in museums, not in law. Yet the laws that created this country are barely more than a century old. Should they be scrapped? Why then do we celebrate church anniversaries of 100 or 125 years? Or why do Scots remember Glencoe and Culloden as if they happened yesterday? By contrast, most treaties between Canada and aboriginal peoples date from 1850 — only 16 years before the *Presbyterian Record* was founded.

Perhaps we need to listen more: listen to what natives have to tell us about their lives and history and listen to God.

Besides working towards healing our relationships with natives, we might find a model for healing other divisions in the church. We are all guilty of talking too much. Few are guilty of listening too much.

David Harris





Moderator Jean Morris  
listens carefully to a  
commissioner at  
General Assembly  
in Edmonton.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### 16 131st General Assembly

Claiming the joy of our faith  
Aboriginal ministries declared  
priority  
Embracing faith, working  
together

## FEATURE

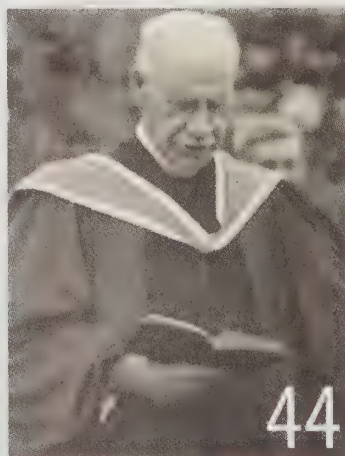
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**On the cover:** Cecilia Jeffrey school  
in Kenora, Ont.

## Faith can move a mountain

I recently had major surgery with a lot of anxiety and concerns. When you have an operation you are not allowed to wear any jewellery. I have a necklace with a cross I always wear so I felt lost without it.

I had recently received a packet of mustard seeds from the Canadian Bible Society. I taped a band-aid with a seed in it to my toe. I also taped a seed on paper and wrote the verse, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can move a mountain." I gave one to each member of my family. They carry it with them to this day.

Well, I moved the mountain and I am doing well.

*Edna Leschyshyn  
Orangeville, Ont.*

## Knox had woman problems

It was with considerable interest that I read First Female Moderator Faces a Church Without Walls (April). The Scottish moderator is clear that "a patriarchal, hierarchical system of church is ill disposed to reward the delicate and subtle qualities that make life a pleasure," her predecessors having all been males. That, of course, led automatically to John Knox and "the monstrous regiment."

Consider that John Knox spent much of his life exiled from Scotland because of:

- Mary of Guise, mother of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Regent in Scotland backed by French troops and money, resulting in the uprising of 1559

- Mary I, Tudor, "Bloody Mary", from whom Knox fled England
  - Catherine De Medici, Queen Regent of France, implicated in the death of four of the Scottish delegates for the return of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.
  - The unpredictable Tudor, Elizabeth I
- One can scarcely deny the topicality of his subject at that period.

*Kennedy Maconochie  
Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Que.*

## Deference to traditions

I concur fully with Clyde Ervine's encyclopedic prescription for theological education (May) affirming that it is "about thought, about engagement with the sources of the Christian faith, as well as engagement with everything past and present that challenges the Christian faith." At once, however, the problem of engagement emerges when the challenges of the past are not remembered and when contemporary secular society may dismiss the faith as a subject worthy of challenge.

Our contemporary witness faces the difficulty of moving Christian interpretation from pre-modern world-views and advancing it to address post-modern outlooks shaped by scientific technological culture. The task requires educators with some facility for understanding cosmic changes affecting us as human beings within our environment. In short, I maintain that purposeful engagement with our past and our mission requires more explicit deference to graduate

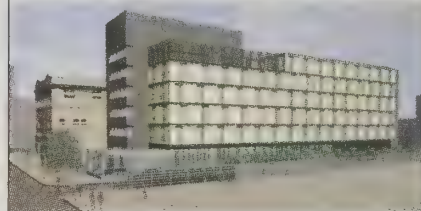


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*Letters continued*

school and confessional traditions of theological education than are focused in some current models.

James Farris

Charlottetown, P.E.I.

## Get involved in Fair Trade

As globalization is clearly producing winners and losers, Christians need to respond. In addition to the information in your May issue, I would like to add a few additional points of information. First, there are other Presbyterian churches involved in Fair Trade. PRESCRAFT in Cameroon has been assisting artisans to find markets for over 40 years. Ten Thousand Villages has a long-term trading relationship with PRESCRAFT and their products are available at our stores. Secondly, congregations across Canada from many denominations are organizing Ten Thousand Villages Festival Sales (weekend sales organized on a volunteer basis and run out of a church or community centre). Last year over 50 congregations were involved.

Marvin Frey

*Executive Director, Ten Thousand Villages  
New Hamburg, Ont.*

I very much appreciated the May Record's focus on fair trade coffee. This is one way that we Christians can make a real change to the well being of growers in other countries.

Another advantage to buying fairly traded produce is that the food is (not always) grown organically. In the case of coffee this means that the coffee plants are not sprayed, as they are grown under the natural canopy of trees. This maintains the natural biodiversity, thus improving the health of the workers, maintaining soils that can produce for longer than the 10 or fewer

years currently the norm for most coffee plantations.

Ian Gartshore

Nanaimo, B.C.

I've had the pleasure of being a Ten Thousand Villages volunteer for many years at their annual Christmas sale. I appreciated the way you featured Fair Trade in general, and the wonderful assortment of items available at Ten Thousand Villages in particular.

Lorne Massena

Scarborough

Thank you for your editorial and article on Fair Trade products. As one who enjoys a good cup of coffee, the information you presented was enlightening and very timely. I presented the issues of Fair Trade at the May meeting of St. Andrew's Church Women. We have since ordered coffee from Alternative Grounds and served the brew after the Sunday morning service. The women decided to purchase the coffee to support economic and social justice.

I appreciate the efforts you made to bring this issue to our attention. I was unfamiliar with Fair Trade coffee and other products in the small town where I live.

Diana Simpson

Hanover, Ont.

## Recognizing sin as sin

What the Presbytery of East Toronto is doing in their overture to the General Assembly (March) is utter rebellion against Holy Scripture. By the overture to the General Assembly to "establish a committee that will study same-sex marriage" for a period of two years, before "reporting back" to Assembly, is merely an attempt by disobedient ministers and

## Watch For "Reachout For Life!"

With Presbyterian host Dr. Larry Brice

On Family Friendly TV - CTS - Sunday 2:30 pm (ET)

"Featuring contemporary Christian leaders"



elders to open the door for a carte blanche acceptance of all forms of homosexual practice within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I am so sad for those average lay people who want to trust ministers and representative elders, but whose trust is being continually, and intentionally, betrayed.

Those ministers and elders in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, who continue to encourage sinful lifestyles, are forcing those of us who recognize sin as sin to make an Elijah decision. We have to repent and seek God's mercy, or the Presbyterian church, as we now experience it, will continue to be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ, until there is no "Presbyterian" church left.

*Rev. Ron Benty  
Creston, B.C.*

### Reid was a convivial Calvinist

Donald MacLeod's authentic portrayal of W. Stanford Reid is more than a cartoon sketch of some "rumbustious contrarian." Reid welcomed me to Canada and my first appointment in 1943, introduced me to Puritan theologians and presided over my wedding. This preacher-professor was an indomitable debater, a convivial Calvinist and a man of his word.

*Mariano Di Gangi  
Nepean, Ont.*

### Challenge can be enlightening

Kudos to the *Record* for giving exposure to *The Pagan Christ* by Tom Harpur. The author postulates that Jesus, in any form, never existed. Further, Charles Templeton in *Farewell to*

*God* denies the divinity of Jesus. Both books contain a direct rebuttal to scripture, especially the New Testament. Some people believe too little.

On the other hand, many believe that Jesus is God, born of a virgin, that Adam and Eve were actually real people, that the universe was created in six days, that hell exists eternally for unrepentant souls, that heaven exists only for born-again Christians excluding everyone except the chosen few. Some believe too much.

Adherence to the former smacks of atheism. The latter can lead to a jaded view of life, which can result in extremism. For example, the proposed banning of the popular Harry Potter books and the suspicion of finding Satan's influence in Walt Disney productions.

It would be refreshing if all people, including Christians, would speak from the heart, however diverse, and not just parrot what someone has told them to say. Challenge can be both healthy and enlightening.

Spiritual hunger is universal and, ideally speaking, divine truth should be paramount and ongoing.

*J. Gordon Neal  
Whitby, Ont.*

I have read Tom Harpur's *The Pagan Christ* together with other writings on the same theme and it does seem that no matter how controversial this may become it promises to be a primary influence for the future of Christianity.

In fact I would go further in saying that interpreting Scripture as a symbol or

metaphor for reality is the correct psychological attitude to adopt towards mankind's evolutionary development in Christ.

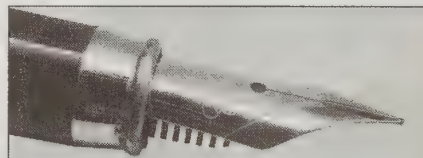
The historical Jesus should be seen as a convenience, an introduction to what we mean by God and the wondrous truth revealed by His Grace.

Those early sages, attempting to understand the meaning of our existence, were struggling with the limitations of language to convey a message so simple yet so profound that we of the 21st century can scarce believe it.

For all the distortion, error, ridicule, condemnation and hypocrisy over the centuries, the truth, although not understood except through faith, lies in our hearts and minds.

The future of Christianity is assured. Its meaning will never die but its form will forever change. The distortion of truth which occurred in our past will be finally understood and in consequence our relationship to what we call God will become clear. The lost light will have been rediscovered.

*Dennis Sutherland  
Victoria*



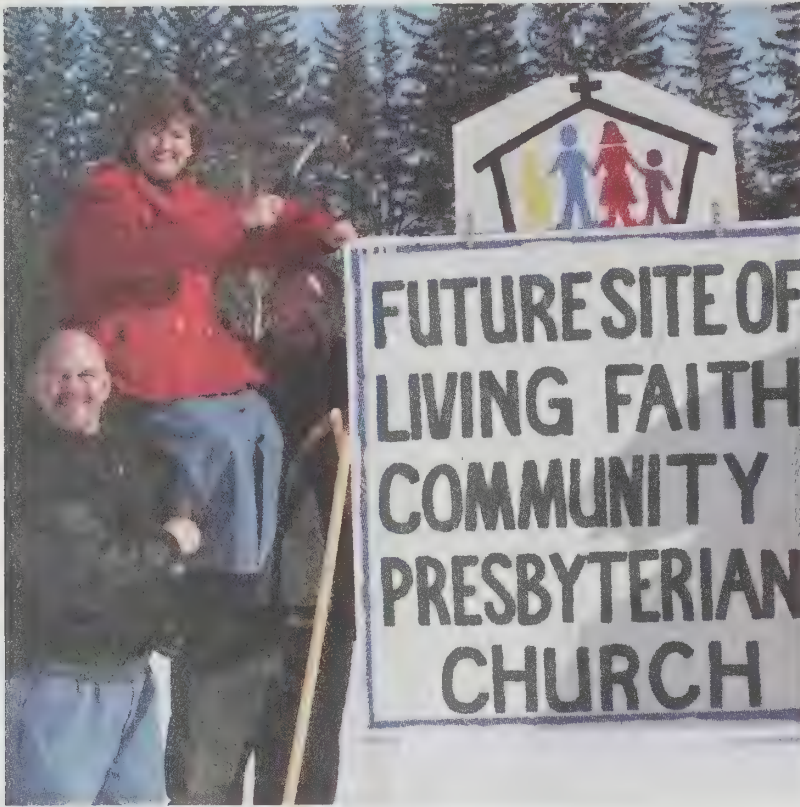
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## Pontius' Puddle





# people & places



They currently meet in a school gymnasium and they are only a year old, but the folks at Living Faith Community, Baxter, Ont., have faith and hope. Heather Malnick hammers in the sign that says it all, as she is held aloft by Kevin Nemeth and John Malnick.



If you don't know what's going on in this event at Knox, St. Catharines, Ont., then you need some kirkin' of your tartan. Holding aloft the sheep parts is Alan McClory; and blowing on the cow parts is Finley Buchanan. Len Taylor took the photograph.



John Mehl, of First, New Westminster, B.C., was very active in his community, and in his memory his wife Betty donated this stained glass window portraying Jesus' love for children. The dedication service led by Rev. T. Bruneau was held last November.

**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.



For more People & Places submissions  
please visit our website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



Moderator Rick Fee is happy to meet Mac Taylor, clerk of session, and Vivien Williamson, the Christmas appeal co-ordinator, while visiting St. Columba, Parksville, B.C. Oh, and then there was the \$7,682 cheque the mission oriented congregation had raised for the World Without AIDS campaign.



Rev. John Cruickshank of St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont., is blissfully happy and rightfully so. Five years of hard work and strong prayer have renewed that building behind him: improved physical access, improved library and nursery, relocated offices and a new gathering space. The congregation is proud and dedicates the renovations to God's glory.



The senior choir at St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., helped raise \$2,500 for tsunami relief with this concert. A special song performed was one written by two members: Rod MacKenzie, lyrics, and Chris Jones, music, collaborated on Cry For Their Tears.



## A JOB WELL DONE

The *Record* had a strong showing at the annual Associated Church Press and Canadian Church Press awards. Amy MacLachlan beat 15 other entries to capture first place at ACP for her June 2004 news story, *East Toronto Presbytery Says No to Temporary Approval of Same-sex Marriage*. ACP judges Canadian and American talent.

The *Record* also received 14 awards at CCP, including four first-places. The magazine received second place for general excellence. Judge Paul Wilson commented: "The quality of the writing is superior, the range of material is broad and engaging, and often presented in a way that confounds reader expectations."

The *Record's* editor, David Harris, was elected president of the CCP, a position he will hold for two years.

The *Record's* CCP awards were as follows:

### FIRST PLACE:

**Original Written Humour** (Fiction-Non Fiction)

– Peter Plymley II, *Pastoral Epistles from Peter Plymley II*

**Narrative** – David Webber, *The Night the Horses Ate the Preacher's Truck*

**Front Cover** – Black and White – Photographer: Peter Williams, *Ted Johnson and the Nightmare of Biafra*

**Editorial writing** – David Harris, *For the Record* – *Security Can't Be a Retreat From Peace*

### SECOND PLACE:

**In-depth treatment of a news event** – Amy MacLachlan, *Ethiopia*.

### Letters to the Editor

**Theological Reflection** (Doctrinal) – J. Philip Newell, *Celtic Spirituality Listens for the Heartbeat of God*

**Biographical Profile (living or dead)** – Hugh McCullum, *Ted Johnson, A Retrospective*

**Black & White Photo** – Photographer: David Harris, *Palestinian Mother*

**Colour Photo Spread** – Photographer: David Harris, *Can the Middle East Have Peace?*

### General Excellence, denominational magazines

### THIRD PLACE:

**News story, magazine** – Amy Cameron, *Filling in the Gaps*

**Media Review, magazine** – Alex MacLeod and Harris Athanasiadis

**Original Artwork, magazine** – Artist: Edward Schnurr, *Program Helps Divorced People Find Healing, Hope and Christ*

## Fellowship Centre says it faces funding crisis

The Kenora Fellowship Centre (Anamiewigummig) is facing a funding crisis, says a representative from the centre, which could threaten its 40-year existence. Grants from the federal government totaling \$125,000 have been cut, meaning the winter hostel would likely have to close, and the 80 to 90 homeless who seek the centre's warmth would be left in the cold.

Currently, the centre is the only homeless shelter in the city of 15,000, serving 77 First Nation communities. About 12 to 15 people spend the night at the shelter, where an average of 40 hot meals are served daily. "If the centre is forced to close, we would show by our actions a total lack of compassion and commitment," said board chairman, Bob Wyber, in a memo.

For the last five years, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada have provided funding. But a new initiative to support strictly native organizations has changed the way this support is handed out. Since there is a native friendship centre in Kenora, the money is being funneled there.

"I believe the hostel portion of the operation is the responsibility of government or the community at large," said Wyber. "I also believe the Presbyterian Church in Canada has an important role to play."

Kenora is one of five aboriginal missions supported by Canada Ministries. The \$500,000 healing and reconciliation fund developed in response to the residential schools healing initiative, is not used to support these ministries — something that frustrates those involved in projects like Kenora. This was a source of some debate at General Assembly (see page 20).

The church helps fund its native ministries through Presbyterians Sharing. A full grant is given to support the centre's director — in this case, Henry Hildebrandt. As stipend levels for ministers increase, so do the stipends for directors. Canada Ministries also helps with repairs to the manse and other buildings.

Gordon Haynes, associate secretary for Canada Ministries, said, "Funding for our five native ministries has gone up by about half in the last five years — from about \$316,000 in 2001 to just over \$450,000 in 2006." He said it is the department's second largest expense, next to new church developments. It includes a new ministry in Edmonton and two missions in Winnipeg.

Wyber said the community supports the soup kitchen, but money for staff and utilities is still needed. He said while the centre could continue to offer meals during the daytime without financing for the hostel operation, it would still leave a shortfall of approximately \$9,000. He said both the community and the church have to accept responsibility.

"I think we do have an important role to play," said Haynes. "We think aboriginal ministries are a priority and we're involved in that." He said if givings to Presbyterians Sharing increased, the church would be able to direct more funds to native ministries. — AM



**Rev. Rick Fee, moderator of the 2004 General Assembly and the new General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, received an honorary doctorate from Knox College in May.**

## Iacobucci to oversee residential schools claims

The Presbyterian Church hopes to meet with a new federal government representative working on resolving claims of former residential schools students. Mr. Justice Frank Iacobucci is mandated by the government to help resolve claims in a fair and equitable way so that the claimants can move towards healing. He will work with former students, as well as legal counsel for those students, legal counsel for churches and the Assembly of First Nations. "We're looking forward to meeting with Justice Iacobucci to see where we can be helpful in bringing resolution, healing and closure for the claimants, who have waited so long," said Rev. Stephen Kendall, the church's principal clerk.

Kendall said he's particularly interested in working ecumenically towards Iacobucci's broader mandate of commemoration, developing truth and reconciliation processes and looking at improvements to the Alternative Dispute Resolution process.

The new announcement does not have an immediate impact on the church's agreement with the federal government. Signed in 2003, the church's liability in residential schools litigation was limited to a maximum of \$2.1 million. "Our agreement still stands," said Kendall. "But we're interested in being part of any discussions about possible changes."

The appointment of Iacobucci was precipitated by the signing of a new agreement between the government and the

Assembly of First Nations. It outlines the role of each party and how they can work together to resolve claims. "In addition to exploring ways to recognize the residential school experience so that true reconciliation can be achieved," said Justice Minister Irwin Cotler, "these discussions will focus on ensuring that former students have options for pursuing their claims of sexual and serious physical abuse, and on finding ways to support the healing that needs to continue."

Iacobucci has been asked to recommend a settlement package that will address a redress payment for all former students of residential schools, a truth and reconciliation process, community based healing, commemoration, handling legal fees, and an appropriate Alternative Dispute Resolution process that will address serious abuse. His recommendations are expected no later than March 31, 2006.

He has already sought and obtained a delay in the Baxter National Class Action suit until October, so he can negotiate with claimants' legal counsel regarding possible lump sum payments to all former residential schools students and their families. If the suit is certified, the Presbyterian Church's current payment commitments could be affected. In the meantime, the settlement agreement for the Presbyterian Church remains in place so that claimants will continue to receive 100 per cent of any validated claim. —AM



# Women give voice to Africa's voiceless

*Female minister seeks to resolve her nation's many divisions*

BY MICHAEL MCATEER

*Women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also better equipped to prevent or resolve it.*

— UN GENERAL SECRETARY, KOFI ANNAN

The women filed into a conference hall near Johannesburg, South Africa carrying their homemade placards spelling out some of the challenges facing women across the vast African continent:

Conflict. Female Genital Mutilation. Injustice. Poverty. Wife Battering. Malaria. Illiteracy. Unemployment.

The placard held aloft by Rev. Miriam Banda of Malawi's Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), read: HIV/AIDS.

Banda was one of three Malawian delegates — two Christians and a Muslim — to April's second Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa summit coordinated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and hosted by the National Religious Leaders Forum of South Africa. The 38-year-old mother of two was also among the 100 or so women who gathered for a pre-summit "mothers and daughters of Africa" forum focusing on women, who bear the brunt of Africa's many problems.

Drawing together about 240 delegates from different cultural, tribal and religious backgrounds and from 34 African nations, the summit was an expression of Africa's multi-faith reality. Most of the delegates were Christians or Muslims but there were Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, Jews, Rastafarians, and followers of African traditional religions among them. What united them was a shared dream of a healthy, peaceful Africa free from war, conflict and disease.

Describing Africa as being at a crossroads, a high-ranking UN official said in a message to the summit that sub-Saharan Africa is the only area in the world heading backwards, with life expectancy declining and the number of people living in grinding poverty rising.

If the continent is to find the road to recovery, he said, it must especially listen to the voice of women who represent more than half the continent's population.

As a member of Malawi's Public Affairs Committee, Banda could relate to the UN official's message.

Began in 1992, primarily to play an advocacy and mediation role in Malawi's transition to democracy between 1992 and 1994, the committee — made up of Christians and Muslims — encourages religious communities to participate in the country's social and political affairs by promoting democracy,



The education of women is a vital component of Africa's recovery process, says Rev. Miriam Banda.

PHOTO: MICHAEL MCATEER

peace, unity and human rights. It also acts with NGOs and other humanitarian groups to improve living conditions, promote human rights and to prevent the spread of AIDS.

"We act as the voice of the voiceless," Banda said in an interview. "We are like a watchdog, a spokesperson for people."

Raised a Presbyterian, Banda was granted a BA in theology by the University of Malawi even before her church began to consider women as suitable candidates for ordination.

After some heated debate, the denomination approved the ordination of women and Banda was ordained in 1999. Now ministering to two congregations, she is one of only five CCAP female pastors in Malawi.

## **If the continent is to find the road to recovery, it must especially listen to the voice of women who represent more than half the continent's population**

delegates joined hands, sang We Shall Overcome, and promised to renew with even greater vigour their efforts to bring peace and stability to their turbulent continent scourged by war and conflict, natural and man-made disasters, poor governance, corruption and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Banda returned to Malawi having endorsed a Mother's Cry for a Healthy Africa statement from the women's forum acknowledging that women as well as men are perpetrators and victims of violent conflicts that have destroyed Africa's "spiritual, economic, social and political well-being."

Spirituality and peace cannot be separated and the value of diverse religions in Africa are essential to peace-building, the women said, calling for measures to ensure women's full involvement in decision-making and peace-building

Having mingled with women from all over Africa, Banda says women can be arbiters of peace, can help resolve conflict and promote tolerance and reconciliation. Education is the key, she says, making the education of women a vital component of Africa's recovery process.

In a manifesto adopted by the summit, religious leaders said "conflict, violence, disease, poverty and the unequal distribution of resources are common challenges for all Africans of every religious affiliation." Continuing cycles of violence "make Africa a continent with many unhealed memories, including those inflicted by conflicts between the many nations and even the religious communities that we represent."

At the same time, delegates left the summit with a caution that ethnicity, tribe, religion and other potentially divisive factors could torpedo their efforts to bring about a stable, peaceful Africa. They were also asked to take a hard look at religious dogma and the interpretation of their holy scriptures, which could help trigger conflict and misunderstanding. Constant communication, they were told, breaks down barriers, challenges stereotypes and builds confidence across the wider society.

Following the summit, the Rev. Ishmael Noko, the Zimbabwean-born LWF General Secretary and summit convener called the interfaith gathering a "historical new African process on the road to peace." He said delegates from different faiths had put aside issues that divided them in the interest of a peaceful and healthy Africa.

Summit delegates agreed to reconvene in three years to evaluate progress and to consider the inter-faith summit future.

Michael McAteer is a freelance writer specializing in religious issues.

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## **Zimbabweans share in helping twins**

THE TORONTO Zimbabwean community gathered on May 21 for a dinner and dance to raise money for Tinashe and Tinotenda — the conjoined twins flown from Zimbabwe and separated at the Hospital for Sick Children in March. The event's theme was Any Child is My Child, reminiscent of the traditional Zimbabwean practice of all parents caring for all children. "It takes an entire village to raise a child," said Margaret Zondo, administrator of the Presbyterian Church's International Ministries and one of the event's creators. "These kids are really not their mother's kids. They belong to everyone in Zimbabwe."

Once regarded as the best in Africa, Zimbabwe's health care system is now in virtual ruins. Ravaged by poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS, political and ethnic fighting and a controversial leader in Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe is struggling to break its negative international image. Zondo, who came to Canada from Zimbabwe in 2001, is discouraged by the media's coverage of her native country. "This event takes the spotlight off of the negative for once and puts it on the positive. It shows that things like this can happen among Zimbabweans."

Held at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, the event attracted about 400 supporters and raised nearly \$8,000. Donations are still coming in thanks to the opportunity to make contributions online. Money raised goes to the Herbie Fund of the Sick Kids Foundation, which has helped 450 children from 80 countries come to Sick Kids for life saving treatments. The twins are currently waiting for a second surgery to repair a cleft lip and palate.

"Against all odds, we brought together a community that is otherwise divided along political and ethnic lines," said Zondo. "We were very humbled. It was a community-building event between Zimbabweans and between Zimbabweans and Canadians. It was the best way to say thank you to Canada." — AM



## Testing the waters

A NEW DRINKING WATER regulation from the Ministry of the Environment will relieve many Ontario churches of costly testing and equipment requirements. The new regulation, which came into effect in June, allows churches that own and operate certain types of drinking-water systems to either post signs saying that their water has not been tested or test their water according to steps outlined by the ministry.

Previous regulations had called for churches drawing drinking water from wells or ground water sources to have an engineer design a new system, install new water treatment equipment and undertake regular water testing. The costs for these services could have been as high as \$20,000 in the first year.

Churches are now allowed to post signs indefinitely, and if they do monthly microbial testing and the tests come back clean, they do not have to install the treatment equipment.

The Ministry of the Environment has created *Supplying Safe Drinking Water*, outlining the responsibilities under the new regulation.

— *Diocese of Toronto web news*

## A Kanata Presbyterian buzzes in U.S. spelling bee

CALLED THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST spelling competition, the Scripps National Spelling Bee held in Washington, D.C., saw one Canadian Presbyterian compete. Twelve-year-old Jennifer Hurd, daughter of Rev. James Hurd of Parkwood, Kanata, Ont., put in a good showing but did not advance to the third round. She tied for 98th place when her written and oral scores from the first two rounds were just short of what was needed to advance. The winner, Anurag Kashyap from San Diego, California, spelled *appoggiatura* correctly to win the championship after 19 rounds.

This was the first time in its 78-year history Scripps welcomed Canadians. Finola Hackett of Alberta was the highest placed Canadian finishing in a tie for 11th. — AM

## Healing the church's relationship with God

*WCC works towards reconciling rifts between its members*

Remembering the Pentecostal belief that God can and does heal today could be healthy and worthwhile for the Christian church, according to Ron Wallace, associate secretary of International Ministries for the Presbyterian Church. Wallace attended the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in May. Held in Athens, Greece, the idea of God's healing ran throughout the international event. "Healing on a horizontal level, between denominations, also implies healing the church's relationship with God," he said.

That the church needs healing and reconciliation among its members was given a visual aid when protesters from the Greek Orthodox Church gathered outside the proceedings, shouting and swearing and brandishing signs that equated the WCC with the antichrist. Wallace tried to keep things in perspective. "It shows the complexity of our world, and that there are no easy answers," he said. "There was no attempt to come up with solutions. All you can do is pray and carry on and continue working at it."

Wallace pointed out that the protestors were a small minority and that they didn't represent the entire Greek Orthodox Church. The church's archbishop, His Beatitude Christodoulos, welcomed the delegates to Greece.

The conference was the 13th of its kind. The first was held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910. This year's theme of "Come Holy Spirit — Heal and Reconcile" represented a shift in how the conference has changed its focus over the decades. Wallace said the emphasis used to be on strategizing how to evangelize the world. Now they emphasize fellowship, worshiping together and learning about each other.

This focus on togetherness was highlighted by the participation of non-WCC members for the very first time. Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical representatives were allowed to take part in discussions and debates. Wallace said the council had come to realize that the next step in its ecumenical endeavours was to reach out and be more inclusive. The differing viewpoints, while causing some initial disagreement could actually be beneficial, said Wallace, leading to greater unity and hope for the future.

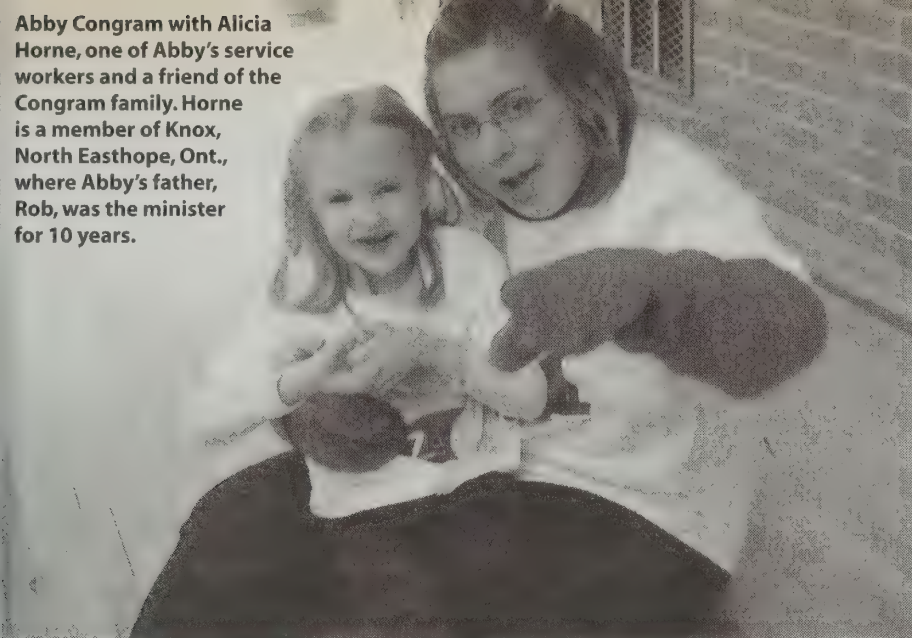
Wallace said the hope is that these denominations will one day become members, and the WCC can "truly call it itself an ecumenical coalition." About 500 people participated in this year's conference, representing more than 300 churches and Christian organizations from around the world.

The conference's aim of working together towards reconciliation and healing comes from the growing belief in godly healing in Africa and Latin America. "The emphasis on healing is much stronger in other parts of the world, following Jesus' practice of healing in the New Testament," said Wallace. He said in China, many believers have come to Christ after being healed from physical sicknesses when people prayed.

The large sessions of the conference were interspersed with worship, smaller workshops and intimate home groups where 10 people gathered each day to pray and discuss the day's events. "We were all interested in each other's ideas," said Wallace. "It was here that we really got to know each other and shared our thoughts with mutual respect."

Heather Chappell, program assistant for stewardship and education for mission in the Presbyterian Church, also attended the conference as a reporter. The next conference will be held in 2010 in Edinburgh, commemorating the event's 100th anniversary. — AM

Abby Congram with Alicia Horne, one of Abby's service workers and a friend of the Congram family. Horne is a member of Knox, North Easthope, Ont., where Abby's father, Rob, was the minister for 10 years.



## Church staff raises money for girls with rare disorder

Presbyterians ran for Rett on May 15, helping to raise money for a disorder many parents and doctors don't even know about. Rett Syndrome is a degenerative neurodevelopmental disorder that first appears in girls between six and 18 months of age. It affects about one in every 10,000 to 15,000 girls, with life expectancy believed to be about 40 years. There is no cure. "This run was a concerted effort to raise awareness," said Rob Congram, whose daughter Abby is afflicted with the disorder. "The money was great but the real goal was to let people know this is out there."

Rett Syndrome is named for the doctor who first discovered it in 1966. Doctors are better equipped to diagnose the condition today, but many are still mistakenly calling it autism. Although research is on-going, a culprit gene for the disorder was discovered in 1999. Found on the X chromosome, the significant gene contains a damaged or missing protein. Since this protein regulates the expression of other genes, there are a wide variety of symptoms and varying degrees of expression. "This gene is like the conductor of an orchestra," explained Congram. "If it's messed up, the orchestra doesn't play very well."

Rett girls generally have normal development until signs of muscle atrophy set in during the early stages of life. As the condition worsens, motor ability digresses, with walking becoming difficult and speech virtually disappearing. Compulsive behaviours such as hand wringing and washing become evident, as do gait abnormalities and trouble focusing the eyes. Head and brain growth also slowdown.

Abby, 6, is able to walk, but has lost her ability to talk and use her hands. "One of the biggest challenges is bridging the communication gap and helping her when she hurts," said Congram. "But worse than that is not knowing how the disorder will play out, and the fear of what the future holds for your child."

The *Record's* former editor, Rev. John Congram, attended the fundraiser in support of his granddaughter. Several staff from church offices also made the trek to Milton, Ont., where the walk/run was held. Margaret Henderson, Bob Anger, Pat Martin, Susan Clark and Elza Furzer donned their Run4Rett t-shirts and made the one-, five- or 10-kilometre trek through the city. It was the first time such an event was held in Canada. The mayor of Milton cut the ribbon at the race's start, and a doctor from Sick Kids' Hospital researching the disorder received a cheque for \$53,000. — AM

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3415 Redpath Street, Montreal, Quebec H3G 2G2

Sunday, September 18,  
2005 at 11am, we are honoured to  
welcome as the Third Annual  
Bicentennial Guest Preacher,



The Reverend Dr.  
**John M.  
Buchanan**

Senior Minister, Fourth  
Presbyterian Church,  
Chicago  
and Senior Editor of  
*The Christian Century*

Dr. Buchanan has been Pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago since 1985. He is also Senior Editor of *The Christian Century* and President of the Christian Century Foundation.

He has served as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as well as on several seminary boards.

Dr. Buchanan has received many honorary degrees from US universities.

## Preaching Workshop

*Words, the Word, and the  
World: Preaching faithfully  
and contextually*

Monday, September 19, 2005  
9:30-11:30 a.m. at  
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\$25.00, includes lunch

Free for students with I.D.

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## Post-tsunami work continues

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is part of the fourth largest tsunami aid project approved by the Canadian government in its tsunami matching funds program. According to the Canadian International Development Agency's website, the project in India is only surpassed by efforts led by the three aid giants — Red Cross, World Vision and UNICEF.

Working with the United Church of Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian World Service & Development submitted the \$6 million proposal to the government to use the matching funds to help rebuild three villages near Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, India, through Action by Churches Together.

The four churches also contributed \$3 million to ACT for efforts in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand. Focus has moved to longer-term rehabilitation projects such as establishing mobile clinics, clean water and sanitation programs, temporary schools, offering trauma counselling and providing seeds, tools and fishing equipment.

Presbyterians contributed more than \$1.3 million to PWS&D's tsunami appeal, with an additional \$747,956 in matching funds from the Canadian government. This enabled the church's relief agency to give more than \$2 million towards tsunami relief and rehabilitation.

## Biking for Bibles

THE CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY is conducting a coast-to-coast bike ride in honour of its centennial anniversary. Participants will cover more than 7,800 kilometres, cycling through every province in 62 days. The ride starts July 2. The event celebrates the society workers who once travelled to communities by foot or on horseback, offering Bibles to those who needed them. The society hopes to raise \$500,000 to be used for Bible translation, publication and distribution projects.

## Megachurches multiply in U.S.

There are at least 1,200 Protestant churches with more than 2,000 weekly worship attendants across the United States, a study from an American seminary has discovered. The figure was nearly double the number of megachurches previously thought. "We hope and pray that we can help correct misperceptions and better network these churches with each other," said Dave Travis of Leadership Network, a partner in the project.

The megachurches represent three tenths of one per cent of all congregations. They account for more than four million weekly attendees, however, and as many as 8 to 12 million members.

Megachurches are found in 45 states, with Texas, California, Florida and Georgia leading the pack. Houston and Dallas alone account for 56 mega churches or 4.5 per cent of the total.

The greatest numbers of megachurches are nondenominational or Southern Baptist, followed by the Assemblies of God, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church.

The study will be repeated at least every two years in hopes of shedding new light on the megachurch phenomenon. "Our preliminary research indicates there could very well be another 200 to 400 megachurches in addition to these," said Warren Bird, Leadership Network director. — *AM*

## Minister denounces casual sex among nursing students

A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER in Ekwendeni, Malawi, has warned male and female nursing students not to exploit the proximity of their accommodation by engaging in casual sex. "Please take yourselves as students with an agenda to fulfill," said Rev. Maurice Munthali, the acting general secretary of the Livingstonia Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. "Bringing you together should not be interpreted to mean you should be engaging in sexual relationships. This is the place of God. Try to keep it holy."

Munthali was speaking at the opening of the Ekwendeni School of Nursing in May. The facility, which cost two million Malawi kwacha (\$21,037 Cdn), has 22 beds for male nurses. Attracting men to the nursing field in Malawi is a relatively new phenomenon, as the profession has traditionally been the domain of women.

The northern area of Malawi has a high incidence of HIV/AIDS in a country ravaged by the pandemic and where the medical profession has been stretched to its limits in recent years. Munthali said when students forget their mission and start engaging in sexual relationships, it affects their school performance.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is active in Malawi as supporters of Ekwendeni

deni Hospital, which operates orphan feeding programs, breastfeeding assistance for new mothers and medical attention and moral support to AIDS patients.

— *with files from ENI*

## Mennonites join council

THE MENNONITE Church Canada is an official member of the Canadian Council of Churches. This brings the council's membership up to 20 traditions, including Anglican, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches. The Presbyterian Church is an active member.

After a number of years as an observer of the council, the MCC submitted an application that was unanimously approved. The Mennonite church brings its long history as a peace church, its depth of theology, its commitment to Scripture and its passion for social justice.

The Canadian Council of Churches is one of the broadest ecumenical organizations in the world. It works in a forum structure in which all voices have equal weight.



## Aiming to end child poverty

Canada's relief and aid community is joining with 50 other countries to help Make Poverty History. The international campaign is supported by the Presbyterian Church through Presbyterian World Service & Development. The campaign has three themes: More and Better Aid, Make Trade Fair and Cancel the Debt. Canada has added the theme of End Child Poverty.

Micah Challenge Canada, a broad association of Christian agencies, including the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is rallying for a similar cause. It issued a letter to the prime minister in June, urging stronger action to reduce global poverty, including cancelling 100 per cent of debt owed by the world's poorest countries. The two initiatives are asking Canada to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals adopted by all United Nations member countries in 2000.

The campaigns coincide with several world events regarding foreign aid and international commerce. The G8 Summit will meet in July, the UN Millennium Summit in September and the World Trade Organization's Conference in December.

To show their support for making poverty history, Canadians are wearing white bands, which can be obtained through PWS&D. They can be ordered in large numbers if congregations want to launch their own projects in support of the cause. Contact PWS&D at 1-800-619-7301 for more ways to get involved. — AM

## Food aid to North Korea

CANADIAN CHURCHES SENT 10,000 tonnes of wheat and 1,320 tonnes of soybeans to North Korea through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Presbyterian World Service & Development is the lead agency for the shipment. CFGB member churches contributed more than \$1 million, matched by more than \$4 million from the Canadian International Development Agency.

The shipment left Vancouver on May 23. The food is expected to be distributed in August, when need is expected to be at its highest. The wheat and beans will be used to produce fortified food products for approximately 895,000 pregnant and nursing women and children. The United Nations reported that food shortages in North Korea were escalating to crisis levels and they were having to suspend rations to children, elderly people and poor households due to lack of food donations. — AM

## Taiwan celebrates 140 years of Protestant ministry

TAIWAN IS CELEBRATING the 140th anniversary of the arrival of Protestant missionaries. Canadian Presbyterian missionary George Mackay was one of the pioneers, arriving in 1872. "When the early evangelists arrived on Taiwan to proclaim the gospel of Christ, local people greeted them with thrown stones, spittle, knives and rejection," said Rev. Dr. C. M. Kao, former General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. "But the gospel was fearlessly proclaimed and the spirit of these brave forerunners remains a pattern worthy of emulation by contemporary Christians."

During celebrations, the Taiwan church leaders have referred to the 1955 Presbyterian initiative to "double in a decade." The movement reached its goals, thanks, in part, to the intake of 70 per cent of Taiwan's aboriginal peoples into churches following the Second World War.

"Is it possible that we might once again experience a 'double the church movement' in Taiwan, but this time not just in the Presbyterian Church?" asked Rev. James Hsia of the Chinese Christian Evangelistic Association. "If this vision can penetrate deeply into the hearts of Taiwan's clergy and lay church leaders, we could proclaim, 'God is glorified in all Taiwan.'"

Hsia and Kao spoke at a prayer breakfast in Taipei, scheduled just before the national celebrations began in June. Several representatives from the Presbyterian Church in Canada were on hand. Margaret Zondo, administrator with International Ministries, and former missionaries Louise Gamble, Jack and Betty Geddes, Joy Randall and Wilma Welsh participated in the celebrations.

Despite a long history of continuous mission work, only four per cent of Taiwan's population is Christian. William J. K. Lo, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, reflected on the disadvantages of being a large institution. "Institutionalism may have caused us to lose our flexibility in mission," he stated. "We must all reflect on our past, not forgetting that through this celebration of our history, God will lead us into and upon the road that lies ahead."

— Taiwan Church News



REPORTS BY

AMY MACLACHLAN

PHOTOS BY DAVID HARRIS

**C**hristians must find joy in the cross, an animated and passionate Rick Fee declared in his final sermon as the church's leader. He said Jesus himself came and endured for the joy that lay beyond his suffering. It is at the empty cross where joy can be found. "It is not the emptiness of despair or the loss of meaning," he told the more than 400 parishioners who packed the stifling hot First, Edmonton, for the opening of the 131st General Assembly. "It is the emptiness that holds open the possibility for something amazing, something God-given to emerge."

Fee reminded the commissioners it was their duty to find something amazing. "The joy of this assembly will be in the diversity, the debate, the discussion, the discourse and the dynamic interplay of minds and spirit," he said. "Joy will not be claimed by thinking we must find all the answers nor in thinking we will have all the answers. By being faithful, by wrestling with what God has presented, we will claim the joy of our faith."

Lively hymns and heartfelt prayer echoed inside the red brick walls of First Church as the assembly sang together. They received a taste of the native spirit that would permeate the week when Mary Fontaine, director of Hummingbird Ministries in Vancouver, sang *Amazing Grace* in Cree accompanied by her drum. Fontaine said she was "proud of the Presbyterian Church" and the grace with which she received the invitation to sing.

Following worship, Fee helped the assembly install its new moderator, Rev. Jean Morris. She thanked her family, friends, co-workers and "the many long-term care residents who are my flock and can't be here." As Director of Spirituality and Pastoral Care at the Bethany Care Society in Calgary, Morris works with seniors and vulnerable adults. It is from this focus that she draws her three themes for the year: ministry with seniors, non-parish ministries and ecumenism. "We believe the work of the church is done through community," she told the assembly. "I will do my best to lead that community as moderator."

Morris' father Harrold was moderator in 1989.



## Claiming the joy of our faith

### Church reaffirms traditional marriage

MARRIAGE IS A UNION of one man and one woman, General Assembly declared in reaffirming its position. The definition is based on the church's subordinate standards. Moderator Jean Morris will inform the federal government of the assembly's decision.

The issue caused a lengthy and heated debate, with the moderator asking Rev. Rick Fee to assume the chair during part of the discussion. Commissioners were given time to think about the issue before voting, while a special committee discussed two overtures in depth.

One commissioner said it was "time for the church to speak out in a prophetic voice, but with love to those struggling with sexuality." Another mentioned the diversity of opinion within the church and for that reason it is difficult to claim one clear voice as its own. Another was hesitant about the church telling the government what to do.

The assembly will also advise presbyteries to tell ministers and congregations seeking guidance concerning the conduct of and participation in marriages that they be directed to the confessional position of the church on the definition of marriage.

# Enjoy it, Fee advises

*Present and past moderators share thoughts on being church's most prominent figure*

**T**he church likes the moderator. They really do," Rick Fee told Jean Morris. "They see the moderator as somebody through whom they can show appreciation to the church."

Fee's words already ring true for this year's moderator, Rev. Jean Morris. Although her new title was less than a week old at the time of this interview, Morris was already on the receiving end of compliments, praise and well wishes from the assembly's commissioners. "I'm thankful for the way I've been treated by the assembly, with incredible grace and respect," she said. "I'm touched by the kindness and support of the commissioners. I've felt connected and that's important to me."

For Morris, the week has been a whirlwind of emotions. She has felt gratitude, awe, humility, encouragement and physical exhaustion. "It's a very humbling and almost shocking thing to have everyone stand up when you walk in a room. That really struck me when I stepped into that sanctuary."

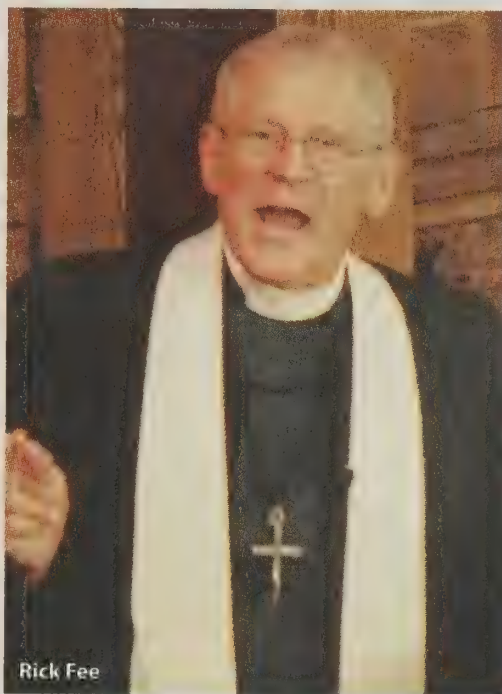
For Fee, whose year in charge has drawn to a close, the feelings are slightly different. "Passing on the torch is very happily done," he admitted. "You expect it to happen, and you put your mind to that fact."

Fee was particularly impressed by the support for the Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, which he initiated last June. He was struck by the commitment shown by congregant volunteers to the cause. And it proved another benefit. "The AIDS campaign acted as a bridge in the family. It was a way of breaking into topics you normally wouldn't talk about."

Morris was praised for moderating an open and efficient assembly. This came as no surprise to her father Harrold. "I knew she'd do a good job," he told the *Record*. "I've responded to any questions she has had," he said, "but it is important for her to be her own person."

"Dad's been really supportive, and I've been grateful for that." She's quick to point out that her father isn't the only man in her life. Her husband, Matthew, has been a constant source of support since she found out she was nominated.

When asked if he had any advice for his colleague, Fee was brief: "Enjoy it!" he said. "Jean's person and her ministry are things that will give the church encouragement and vision. And as this assembly said, the church is not to be held in trust for the future — it's for everyone now."



## IN BRIEF...

- As coordinator of the Church of North India's HIV/AIDS program, which focuses on women, youth, refugees, drug addicts and prison inmates, Karuna Roy, an ecumenical visitor to assembly, works with those infected and affected by the virus and designs prevention programs. Of India's one billion people, there are 5.1 million cases of HIV/AIDS, although Roy said the government figures are on the low side, and that tripling the number gives a more accurate picture.

- As the seven-year FLAMES initiative comes to a close, the Assembly decided to follow with a Sabbath year, beginning Dec. 3, 2006, the first day of Advent. To lay the groundwork for this time of prayer, reflection and worship in all aspects of the church's life and ministry, a year of preparation will begin on Nov. 27.

- The Presbyterian Church signed a covenant with the Hungarian Reformed Church, linking the two as partners in mission. Moderator Jean Morris and Rev. Ian Morrison, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, witnessed the document for the Canadian church.

- The Synod of Toronto and Kingston was renamed the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, despite some questions about grammar.

- Reports to future assemblies will be posted on the church's website when the documents are sent to commissioners.

- The 132nd assembly will be held in St. Catharines, Ont., hosted by the Presbytery of Niagara.

- Former moderator and director of Presbyterian World Service & Development, Rev. Rick Fee, will replace Rev. Ian Morrison as the new General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency as of Sept. 1. "I am only one part of the body and I'll rely on the entire denomination to carry out the life and mission of the church," said Fee.

- The Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, led by Presbyterian World Service & Development and initiated by Rick Fee at last year's assembly, has been extended for another year. The national campaign has raised \$434,000 of its \$500,000 target.





Mary Fontaine, director of Hummingbird Ministries, Vancouver, sings Amazing Grace at the opening worship service at First Church, Edmonton.

## Aboriginal ministries declared priority

*Increased funding for new efforts not without its critics*

**E**ach department at church offices must find ways for aboriginal ministries' healing and reconciliation to become a permanent part of their mandate, according to assembly.

An additional motion was adopted that affirmed funding for ongoing native ministry as a high priority.

After considerable debate assembly reached several conclusions. The Life and Mission Agency was commissioned to encourage and support individuals, groups and congregations to increase their awareness and understanding of the impact of colonialism on aboriginal peoples. The LMA will also develop resources and programs that will encourage and support the church to initiate dialogue with aboriginals, and to build lasting partnerships through con-

crete sustainable projects with measurable results.

"We encourage Assembly Council, the Life and Mission Agency and Canada Ministries to review the financial support provided by Presbyterians Sharing..., and to increase this support in light of our commitment to healing and reconciliation." The results of this review should be reflected in the proposed 2007 budget.

Debate centred on whether or not to devote more resources to new ministries and programs, or to simply increase support of existing ones. Rev. Margaret Mullin, director of Anishinabe Fellowship Centre in Winnipeg, had mixed feelings about the church's initiatives. She said she is encouraged by attempts to include aboriginal elements at the assembly. However, she felt developing new

programs for aboriginal ministry was unnecessary. "The resources are already there, they don't need to be developed. Use these resources wisely. Increase the church's awareness of what's there already. Invest in the lives we serve with compassion and concrete help."

Rev. Ian Morrison, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, said healing and reconciliation is built through relationships, "and the relationships we want you to develop can be facilitated by new resources."

Lew Ford, who has been part of the healing and reconciliation design team, understood both sides. "Our report is trying to address the healing of the relationship; it does not diminish the healing already happening in various centres. One is affecting the immediacy; the other is affecting the future," he said.

The Healing and Reconciliation Task Group of the Assembly Council will consider using money from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund to support the work assigned to the Life and Mission Agency in the above recommendations, and to contribute additional funds to the church's existing aboriginal ministries. The majority of funding currently comes from Presbyterians Sharing.

### PCC Aboriginal Ministries

#### Edmonton Urban Native Ministry

– Rev. Hoo Sik Kim

#### Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry

– Rev. Stewart Folster

#### Kenora Fellowship Centre / Anamiewigummig

– Henry Hildebrandt

#### Anishinabe Fellowship Centre

(Winnipeg) – Rev. Margaret Mullin

#### Flora House (Winnipeg) – Warren Whitaker

#### Hummingbird Ministries (Vancouver)

– Mary Fontaine

#### Mistawasis Memorial P.C. (Saskatoon)

– George P. Yando

For resources on healing and reconciliation, visit:

<http://www.presbyterian.ca/healing>



Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi receives the E.H. Johnson award from Moderator Jean Morris for being on the cutting edge of mission.

## Modelling our message

**T**he first non-European general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches was honoured at General Assembly with the E. H. Johnson award. Ghanaian Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi made it clear why he is on the cutting edge of mission. "We must respond to others in the midst of suffering and engage with them in mission and cooperation," he said. "Never again should the church be silent or inactive when things around us lead to suffering and death.

"God called us to be agents of transformation," he continued. "Christian commitment entails moving beyond words to action. Together, we can be part of the community God has called us to be."

WARC represents 75 million Christians in 107 countries. Amidst this massive global context, Nyomi's challenge to Christians is to engage themselves fully in the struggle for justice and peace. "The church family must reject any system that negates the fullness of life Christ intended," he said.

Seeking to find ways to be witness to Christ in the modern world, Nyomi presented several ideas. First, mission must be done with respect for others, while not being ashamed of who we are as Christians. "Often, the first thing people do is deny themselves. This is not necessary," Nyomi told the *Record*. "We must remember to respect others, and not be afraid of them." He said evangelism through the use of threats, economic or political power, manipulation, or disrespect is not constant with the call of Christ. "Evangelism is different from indoctrination," he said.

Nyomi also spoke of the need to heal divisions among Christians. "Our calling is to model our message. How can we be the salt and the light of our communities, and make disciples who themselves participate in being the salt and the light? How can we be engaged in our mission of being agents of transformation?"

He said although pluralistic contexts pose challenges, they can also be seen as opportunities. They can lead Christians to dialogue with other faiths, helping to build bridges for peace and healing.

"The calling to share the good news is part of the Christian commitment. To simply share your faith with others is not imposing. We should be excited to share our faith. It's not a bad thing."

## Housing is not salary

A REQUEST TO INCLUDE housing allowance in maternity/paternity leave benefits was denied by General Assembly, which argued the current policy is sufficient. Difficulties revolve around the definition of salary, which, as the Pension and Benefits Board contends, is defined by stipend alone. The federal government provides unemployment benefits based on salary.

The national church provides a top-up to government benefits that equals 95 per cent of stipend. The presbytery believes this income top-up should apply to stipend plus housing allowances.

The decision responded to a 2004 petition from the Presbytery of Hamilton regarding the interpretation of the maternity policy as it relates to Rev. Susan Kerr. The petition was referred to the Pension and Benefits Board, in consultation with Assembly Council and the Life and Mission Agency.

Problems lie in who is responsible for maintaining a minister's housing costs while she/he is on maternity/parental leave. Additional pressure is put on congregations that must provide housing allowances for its permanent minister, as well as any supply they secure during the interim. The Pension Board maintains this is the congregation's responsibility. (See the January 2004 *Record* for further detail.)

The Board reiterated that its actions have followed this policy correctly, but it has begun a further review of the policy to consider whether it is fair and just to all concerned. It may report its findings to a future assembly.

*Maternity/Parental Leaves Policy and Procedures and Resources Handbook* was created by the Pension and Benefits Board and approved by Assembly Council in response to an overture from 2003. It is available on request from the Pension office.



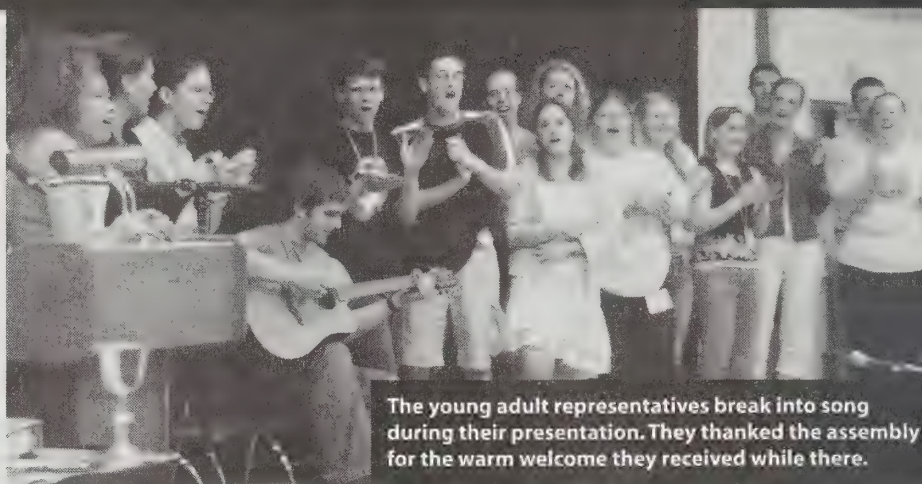
## Stipend increases approved

A CONTROVERSIAL MOVE to raise the stipend for executive staff, including those at church offices and the theological colleges, was passed as an interim policy. Assembly Council was ensured responsibility to set policy and base stipend figures. However, their decisions must be recommended to General Assembly, which has the right to approve or disapprove such suggestions. Any proposed changes would, in turn, be subject to review by the council before assembly makes a final decision.

The issue of responsibility arose when the council set a new stipend level for the incoming chief financial officer in 2003. Questions regarding the council's authority to set such stipends were raised. The council maintained that doing so is within its mandate, although General Assembly always has final say.

The assembly also decided that a committee of the Assembly Council will conduct regular reviews of the stipend grid, will consult with the Committee on Theological Education to set professorial stipends, and will annually review the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) grid and recommend any changes needed. The committee will report to the council every three years on the maintenance and updating of the grid. Any changes to the grid above COLA must be recommended to the assembly for approval. The first reviews will take place in the fall of 2008 with recommendations to take effect in the budget year of 2009.

Stephen Roche, chief financial officer, told the assembly that it is the finance committee's responsibility to report to Assembly Council in March 2006 about where the funding for the raises will be found, other than Presbyterians Sharing.



The young adult representatives break into song during their presentation. They thanked the assembly for the warm welcome they received while there.

## Heard but not counted

**D**uring their presentation to assembly, the young adult representatives lamented their limited roles. "I'd like to make an additional motion," said Barry Wade, Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry. "To give full voting rights to the YARs in conjunction with their speaking privileges." The moderator was asked for permission to speak to the motion, which she granted. "I believe this will give new vitality to the discussions," Wade continued at the microphone. "Our young people are very knowledgeable."

As it stands, the young adults can speak to a motion, but are not allowed to vote.

Talking about issues of the church that aren't often raised in youth groups was a high point. Janelle Garrison, from Waterloo-Wellington presbytery, enjoyed meeting others her age who are interested in the life of the church. "You often hear about how some congregations don't have any young adults, so talking to others your age who have the same values as you do is great," she told the *Record*.

The youth were pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoyed the sederunts, although they were often dismayed by the time many decisions took. "People were passionate. We're making church history with many of these decisions," said Marly Cail, Miramichi presbytery.

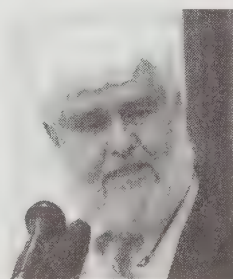
## Morrison heralded

**T**he gentle manner and quiet spirit of Rev. Ian Morrison was heralded in Edmonton, as the General Assembly saluted one of its most-loved members. Morrison will retire as the Life and Mission Agency's General Secretary in September.

"Thank God for the privilege that has been mine to serve in this church that has adopted me as one of its own," he said, addressing the assembly. "Anything I have done to enable the church to be faithful in its witness is because of God. I give God the glory."

Morrison thanked his wife, colleagues at the national office, fellow committee members and his current and former congregations — all of whom have challenged him, supported him, and helped him along the way since immigrating to Canada from Scotland in 1957.

His faithful service to the church, as well as his low-key style of leadership impressed many. "Just when you think there's nothing left to say, a quiet voice is heard offering a challenge that forces us to re-think our position," said Glynnis Williams, who works with refugees in Montreal. "The church is better for it."



Rev. Ian Morrison

## Leading with care adopted

THE ASSEMBLY OVERWHELMINGLY VOTED to adopt *Leading with Care: A Policy for Ensuring a Climate of Safety for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults*. Congregations are expected to implement the policy by July 1, 2006, and presbyteries will oversee this implementation. All congregations will be mailed a copy of the policy, which has been in the works since 2000. Congregations were encouraged to seek the services of David Phillips, who has been working temporarily with the Life and Mission Agency to help congregations understand and implement the policy.

After a hot debate, several commissioners recorded their dissent. Most concerns centred on the ability of small congregations to implement the policy due to a lack of resources, scaring away potential volunteers who may be apprehensive to adhere to some of the requirements, and speculation around whether or not the policy would be able to ensure protection for those who need it. Dorothy Henderson, associate secretary for Christian education, said common sense must be used when implementing *Leading with Care*.

Motivation for the policy originally came from congregation requests about the church's safety practices, as well as an insurance concern in 2002 that threatened coverage if a more extensive safety policy was not put into place. The policy withstood five years of revisions, lawyer consultations, criticism and suggestions from parishioners, and input from several national church staff.

## IN BRIEF...

(continued from page 19)

- The moderator will also write the Minister for International Cooperation welcoming the government's recent increase in foreign aid, but urging it to reach the international target of 0.7 per cent of national GDP by 2015.
- Ten members of the Women's Missionary Society will journey to Japan on June 15. They will attend the annual meeting of the Korean Christian Church in Japan.
- Congregations were urged to designate one Sunday in May, 2006 to highlight planned giving.
- Joy Randall received a minute of appreciation in honour of her service as a missionary nurse to the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. She is retiring after 36 years of service.
- Rev. Dr. Clyde Ervine was granted tenure as director of pastoral studies at Presbyterian College, Montreal. Rev. Dr. Calvin A. Pater, who is retiring from Knox College after 27 years, received a minute of appreciation from the assembly.



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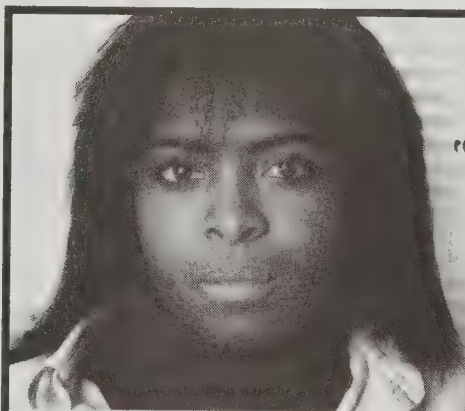
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## IN BRIEF...

(continued from page 23)

- St. Paul's, Glace Bay, made its final loan payment on March 23, cancelling a \$1.1 million loan. The joyous event, commemorated by a thanksgiving service in May, marked the end of a debt that existed since 1993. St. Paul's paid \$600,000 towards the loan, negotiated through PCBC and the Royal Bank, and the Presbyterian Church raised \$569,172. More than two million pancakes were served in the last 12 years to raise funds. "The people of Glace Bay know what it means to live in a Christian family," said Rev. Lloyd Murdoch. "For them, that is the family of the PCC." A motion was passed to express gratitude to the national church, the PCBC, the synod of the Atlantic provinces and the presbytery of Cape Breton.

- Following assembly's approval of the *Presbyterian Record* board's nominations, the *Record* has named two new members, and one returning to its board of directors. Joining the board are Mary Chudley and Sandra Demson; Gordon Higgins returns after serving a one-year interim appointment. The *Record* has nine directors who serve three-year terms, plus the moderator of the day.

- The late Rev. Dr. T. Melville Bailey was honoured by the committee on history by renaming its annual history prize after the founder and former minister of Southgate Church, Hamilton. The Rev. Dr. T. Melville Bailey History Prize is awarded to an individual for the publication of a congregation's history. This year's award went to John Moir for his book, *Unto the Hills Around*, a history of St. Andrew's, Ottawa.

- Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston was named curator of the National Presbyterian Museum in Toronto.

- The revisions to chapter nine of the *Book of Forms* is now complete. It will be sent down under the Barrier Act for reply to next year's assembly. Peter Ruddell, convener, was thanked for his hard work on this task.

- Presbyteries located within a reasonable distance were encouraged to promote Crieff Hills Community as the preferred location for seminars, retreats and regional educational events.


- The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee was given the go-ahead to continue its dialogue on issues of common interest, ministry and concern with the Christian Reformed Church.

- Rev. Pil-Soon Kim is a member of the Korean Christian Church in Japan, one of the world's smallest denominations with only 6,000 members. Now studying at Knox College (sponsored by International Ministries), and as an ecumenical visitor to the General Assembly, Kim spoke of how the church has helped her re-claim her Korean heritage. "Koreans are still recognized as aliens in Japan. Their dreams become diminished or abandoned," she said. "Since coming to Canada, I've realized the significance of your ministries. My dream for the KCCJ is to grow up and comfort others and go forward hand in hand with the Presbyterian Church for justice and peace in Christ."

- The moderator will encourage the federal government to develop a national water policy to ensure a nationwide ban on the commercial export of bulk water and exempt water from the provisions of NAFTA; to help ensure that services for water for personal and domestic use not be bound by the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade and Services; that the government not support mandatory privatization of public water services as a condition for access to loans from the World Bank; and that the government of Canada affirm that access to clean, safe water for personal and domestic use is a basic human right.

- Dialogue between the Presbyterian Church and the Christian Reformed Church of North America began about a year ago. Rev. Richard Vander Vaart addressed the assembly as a representative of that denomination. "Speaking together is not an option," he said. "We are called to do so by Jesus Christ. The world needs to hear our voice." He commended the participation of the young adult representatives at the assembly. "They're not the future of the church," he contended, "they're the church with you right now."





# Finding CHRIST in a fetid Ethiopian JAIL

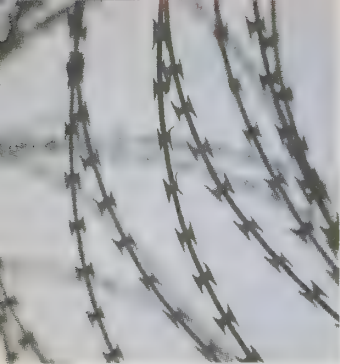
Surviving torture was God's plan,  
innocent educator believes

BY PAULA TODD

**T**here are clues to Mulugeta Abai's Ethiopian past. One of them is the job he has chosen for himself in Toronto at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. Clients say he offers them comfort, that he is perceptive, kind, and always determined to help. But behind his murmurs of understanding, there is his own vivid recall, and behind his sympathy there are the shifting sheets he returns to each night, tossing in nightmares he refuses to share with his wife.

He was born in 1953 in the northern Ethiopian province of Tigray, the first of seven children, with plenty to eat and nice clothes to wear. His father, a lower-court judge, sent his sons to boarding school and impressed upon them the importance of education. Later, when university recruiters suggested Abai try a career in teaching, it fit: "Teaching is like nurturing a plant. You see the children grow." ►





Abai married at 21, and would have four sons. Eventually he was promoted from school principal to district educational director in the province of Gondar. But this quietly rewarding life was unfolding against a backdrop of political

upheaval that would eventually envelop and destroy it.

In 1974, the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by the Dergue, a leftist populist movement led by the military. Under the slogan of “bloodless revolution” the new leaders promised a more democratic society, with land redistribution and a socialist approach to community services. But brutal political in-fighting and the rise of Mengistu Haile Mariam transformed the Dergue from liberators to executioners.

“A lot of people were being executed. I think we were the lucky ones, even to stay alive,” he says. As a high-ranking education official in the midst of student uprisings, he was accused of being a ringleader. He was arrested and released a few times. Once two of his cellmates were taken out and shot, their bodies tossed into the street.

Abai can still see and smell it all with tremendous clarity — the bulky outline of the prison, the dull desperation, the glorious, pitiful sense of accomplishment at having lived one more day. But where did he put the anger, the frustration, the sense of injustice?

“I had those feelings, but you cannot articulate them. You have to keep all that to yourself,” he said. “You age very quickly. It’s hopelessness, really. That’s what it creates.”

Ironically, imprisonment failed as a deterrent to would-be challengers of Mengistu’s dictatorship. It hardened their resolve.

For more than 20 years, what happened next remained Abai’s secret. He shares his story as a testament to what the human spirit can endure.

Abai hesitates at first, but once he begins to speak of the past, he cannot stop. With each sentence, his face contorts and he cries. Yet slowly, his hunched shoulders straighten and widen, imperceptibly at first and then forcefully. He is sitting up, relieved and emboldened by speaking the truth.

**T**he Ethiopian jail cells to which Abai is dragged are small, fetid and crammed with prisoners, many starving and delirious. The floors are filthy, caked with layers of insects and human excrement. With as many as 60 people in one cell, many must take turns lying on the ground to rest. Anyone who falls ill in the middle of the night is left suffering

One evening, Abai listens as the names of almost 50 prisoners are shouted out and one by one they are led away. There is no sleep as the roll call of death drones on — uni-

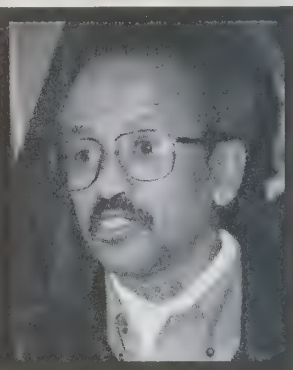
versity students, teachers and medical doctors escorted to slaughter. In the morning, there are only six men left. The silence is so deep that the buzz of a single fly is deafening to Abai. “They took them and killed them, all of them. Some of them were very innocent. Very, very innocent,” Abai says, his voice quavering in disbelief.

In the cell, Abai and his fellow survivors wait, unable to sleep, dreading their own end. Abai! Abai! His name is being called.

There is, first, the horror of hearing friends die and the torment of being unable to help them. Then there is physical pain — the soul-piercing agony of being twisted and beaten.

Handcuffs are clasped around his wrists and a metal pole thrust through his locked hands and feet, so he’s forced to curl in a fetal position. Two men, muscled and mean, hoist

**‘Every time I remember  
my friends, every time  
I see their children, I feel  
guilty for surviving when  
others have perished’**



the pole and suspend Abai from the ceiling, spinning him like a trussed turkey on a barbecue spit. The soldiers take turns lashing the soles of Abai’s feet with leather whips, while a third yells and screams, demanding the names of his co-conspirators. Time dissolves.

For Abai, a teacher who has poured his life’s energy into educating young people, there is an even greater horror: the third torturer is one of his former students. “He pretended to be the good guy. It was brutal. I taught him in grades seven and eight. That’s a betrayal.”

For 22 months, Abai was held in jail, tortured and traumatized. Then, inexplicably, Abai was released. His old job was gone, but he was moved to another district near the national capital of Addis Ababa and demoted to school principal. The following year, he was tipped off that Mengistu’s men were again looking for him. He bolted in the middle of the night, leaving behind his parents, his wife and his four sons. “I believed I had no choice,” he says.

**I**t took Abai 17 days of walking and hitchhiking through the night, and hiding in churches or in the brush during the day to reach the Sudanese border. He quickly found a job teaching English in refugee camp schools run by the Sudan Council of Churches. He was eventually granted asylum in Australia and Canada and arrived in Vancouver in 1983. He was certain his family would be imprisoned and tortured if authorities had any clue of his whereabouts, so Abai didn’t

contact them. Although he visited his Ethiopian family in 1991, the year Mengistu was ousted, and again in 1996, he and his wife eventually divorced.

Of a dozen close friends, only he and one other, now living in the United States, made it out of Ethiopia alive. "Every time I remember my friends, every time I see their children, I feel guilty for surviving when others have perished."

It is that conundrum, perhaps, that underlies Abai's spiritual transformation. Although he was raised in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, he'd never embraced Christianity in a meaningful way until he was imprisoned. It was behind bars that he found faith.

"I think I survived because somebody higher up protected me. I could easily have given the names of my associates and friends. I could easily have destroyed a lot of families. I was able to keep that information intact and to save a lot of lives; I don't think I did it by myself. Somebody else somewhere was helping me be strong."

He rejects the possibility that he simply may have been more resilient, both physically and psychologically, than he realized. "No, it was beyond anything I could have done. It was God."

Abai remarried in 1994 and he and his new wife have two daughters. He has already brought two of his sons to Canada from Ethiopia, and helped them complete university. He dreams of reuniting his entire family.

And now, every day on the job, Abai works to repair the damage by replacing bad experience with good. When victims come to him, he listens. He works to restore what was taken from them. "I encourage people to take the steps that they are comfortable with to start the healing process."

Now free in Canada, why does he spend his weekdays reliving the torture?

"It has given me an excellent opportunity to heal," he said. "You have to see the positive side as well. Why does one survive while others perish? We were 54 in a room, only six or seven of us were left."

And that has left Abai with a profound sense of responsibility. "I should work very hard to prevent such things from happening and to help people who have had similar experiences move from that victim environment and be productive citizens."

Yet this teacher, this restorer of souls and keeper of faith, has a long journey ahead of him. "I get the courage to continue from the love and responsibility I have towards my children. I also draw courage from the many people who have gone through horrible experiences. I admire their resiliency and will to live."

Now he is committed to being there for his two young daughters. And some day, he hopes, all of his family will understand that the pain of his torture pales in comparison to his missing their youth. "I hope they will understand. Time will tell." ❧

Paula Todd is a writer and broadcaster, and co-host of TVOntario's Studio 2. This chapter is excerpted from her book *A Quiet Courage*,

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# Chicks, seeds and schoolhouses

*Waterloo shares the good news with Haiti*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

**Y**ou might say Waterloo North Church has already been bucking the Presbyterian trend. Rather than offering a single, lightly-attended Sunday service, it has two on Sunday — with 80 people attending in the morning and about 250 at night. The congregation also has a unique approach to mission, where Haiti is the country of choice. It stems from the idea that this developing country has no shortage of labour but needs the money and the materials to build better lives. “We’re simply trying to fulfill our mission statement by being a people who continually share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed,” said Waterloo’s minister, Rev. Dwight Strain. “And that often means just giving people what they need.”

Strain has been involved with Haiti for 30 years and has ignited the congregation to reach out to this impoverished country. Taking a cue from child sponsorship programs, Strain often wondered who was taking care of the country’s seniors. He shared his thought with the congregation, who liked the idea and began Seniors Serving Seniors. The congregation sponsors 210 seniors in Haiti for just five dollars a month — what Strain likens to the \$300 monthly pension given to Canada’s seniors for basic necessities. Many of the seniors are caring for grandchildren orphaned by AIDS or civil unrest. The program has been running since February 2004 and letters are sent back and forth between the congregation and those being sponsored.

The congregation is also sponsoring an entire class, including the teacher, which costs about \$50 a month. In November, a young man from the congregation who is a stone mason will travel to a southern village in rural Haiti to help them build a six-room schoolhouse — the first such building in the area. “The congregation was told what was needed and it was done,” said Strain. “It’s really miraculous.”

Rev. Jean Franck Antoine, who operates 17 elementary schools, one high school and one divinity college in Haiti, helped inspire Strain to take on such projects. Antoine visited Waterloo in March to speak about his plight in Haiti and was sent back with soccer uniforms for the students. Strain received an honorary doctor of divinity from Antoine’s seminary in June.

The two ministers sometimes work together to determine what is needed. After realizing that farmers need good quality seed to produce a good crop, the congregation started the Seeds of Hope campaign. Parishioners donate leftover vegetable seeds and solicit seeds from local companies after Canada’s growing season is over. The project has only been operating this year, but when Antoine returned to Haiti after his visit to Waterloo, the congregation already had seeds to send with him. And when Strain travelled to Haiti in June, he took 1,200 packages of seeds for struggling farmers.

Strain already has the cooperation of nearby Anglican and United Church

**‘The congregation was told what was needed and it was done. It’s really miraculous’**

congregations, but he hopes to expand the Seeds of Hope program into a national church initiative. He said any type of seed can be given regardless of Canada’s growing season, as fruits and vegetables grow year-round in Haiti. Currently, the congregation is partnered with garden projects run by the Salvation Army.

Chicks for Change operates on the same grounds, encouraging local hatcheries to donate surplus chicks to Haiti, which are used for meat and egg production, as well as for breeding purposes to increase the quality of Haiti’s chickens. Administration costs are kept as low as possible and travel expenses are shouldered by those doing the travelling.

“It just shows you what one small congregation can do,” said Strain.

Strain is only the third minister in the 30-year-old congregation’s history. His role there is as a consulting minister and revitalization specialist, intended to help struggling congregations get back on their feet. He believes it is a dedication to mission that helped restore the congregation’s health. “Once we got beyond looking at ourselves and turned our attention to mission, God began to prosper us and we began to grow,” he said. “When you look after others, God looks after you.” ☞

## How does your church define Mission?

Share your experiences with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [record@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:record@presbyterianrecord.ca); 700 words max., along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs.

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## Summer Reads

*It was "Selecting the Bible that's Right for You," that threw me for a loop and turned one hour into five. How does one choose?*

## Stumped on hour one

*Bible introduction leaves an appetite for more* | BY AMY CAMERON

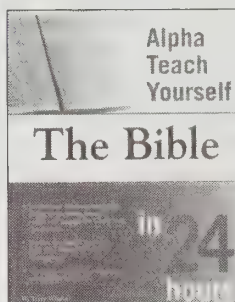
### Alpha Teach Yourself The Bible in 24 Hours

W. Terry Whalin  
Alpha Books

The hardest task in this book was picking my Bible. I saw this book sitting on my editor's bookshelf and immediately accepted the challenge. I thought this would be exactly the thing to introduce me to the Bible and help me gain a nice, rounded experience of the different texts.

*Teach Yourself the Bible in 24 Hours* is written in an Idiot's Guide or Dummies style — complete with little sidebars and annotations such as "cultural facts," "historical facts," and study questions at the end of every chapter. It's not intended to turn you into a biblical scholar in one day but to read the Bible in chunks of one hour at a time. Hour (or Chapter) 17 is The Miracles of Jesus, for example, in which the novice will find out more about Raising the Dead, Feeding the Multitudes and Physical Healings.

Before we go any further, here's a bit of background on Alpha courses. Charles Marnham, a clergyman at Holy Trinity, Brompton in London, England, developed the concept of Alpha — a relaxed and informal introduction to the basic principles of the Christian faith — in 1977. When a man named



Nicky Gumbel took over the Alpha course in 1993, Gumbel saw an opportunity for evangelism. Today, Alpha is aimed at non-churchgoers and thousands of courses run in different countries around the world.

Not having read much of the Bible, I figured that Alpha's *Teach Yourself the Bible* would be a good place to start.

I was stumped on Hour One — Bible Basics.

There is helpful information in the first chapter, including "Who wrote the Bible?" and a note on the different translations. It was "Selecting the Bible that's Right for You," that threw me for a loop and turned one hour into five. How does one choose?

With the generosity of the Presbyterian Church's bookstore, I was able to borrow a few versions for perusal. The beautiful, lyrical tradition of King James appealed to me but I couldn't understand a lot of what was being said. The New International Version was easy to read but the magic wasn't there — none of the poetry or cadence that I was used to hearing in church. I glanced through some other versions, comparing passages. Ultimately, after plenty of suggestions from coworkers and my parents, I chose King James and hoped I was bright enough to figure out what was being said — I was smart enough to pick a large print version.

As I worked my way through the Alpha course book, one thing became very clear. For people who have no background in the church or for those who aren't sure of Christianity, it's a wonderful overview. I, however, was reading the Bible for a different reason. I wanted not only to meditate on the messages within but I wanted more information — more history, more debate and more reflection — than this 24-hour model could offer.

Amy Cameron is a freelance writer.

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# Fast food chicken soup ladles comfort

*Sad stories say so much* | BY AMY CAMERON

## **Chicken Soup for the Christian Woman's Soul: Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit**

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Aubery, Nancy Mitchell Autio and LeAnn Thieman

## **Chicken Soup for the Girlfriend's Soul: Celebrating the Friends Who Cheer Us Up, Cheer Us On and Make Our Lives Complete**

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Mark & Chrissy Donnelly and Stefanie Adrian

## **Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul: Stories to Inspire Caregivers in the Home, the Community and the World**

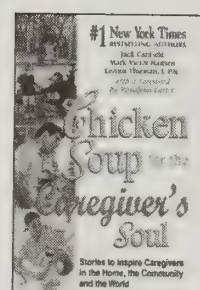
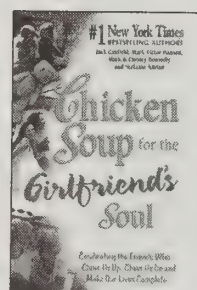
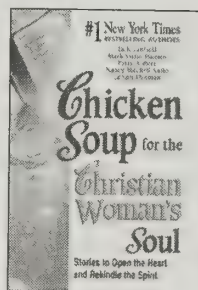
Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and LeAnn Thieman

All published by Health Communications, Inc.

**C**hicken Soup books are all about curling up with a cup of tea and enjoying a good cry. Written to tug at your heartstrings, these collections of stories are short and easy to read. Unfortunately, the quick fix or fast food read sometimes cheapens the poignant tales of woe and celebration. However, the stories are chosen well for the range of experiences and situations.

*Chicken Soup for the Christian Woman's Soul* offers stories of courage, love and tests of faith in equal doses. The writers witness God's power in events as large as adopting foster children and in the small gestures of baking cookies for people in need. Each story reminds the reader that no matter how tough a situation, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Faith, fellowship and love, the book confirms, will help us through times both good and bad.

*Chicken Soup for the Girlfriend's Soul* is full of alternatively heartbreaking and heartwarming stories of friendship. Many are tales of death — a neighbour “snatched away by leukemia,” a friend made at a 9/11 support group for spouses of victims, the love and kindness of co-workers after the loss of a parent. As a result, the book can seem morose at times, especially for essays on girlfriends. But what the collection of stories excels at is reminding the reader of her own special relation-



ships — how they began, what they mean and how they support us in times of need and sadness.

*Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul* is a wonderful book that offers solace to both traditional caregivers — doctors, nurses, teachers — and those who stumbled into it by nursing aging parents or sick children. Again, many of the stories are desperately sad but the importance and joy of care giving is emphasized. Helping people can be difficult; especially when their stories touch our own, but that is the power of these books — we can recognize ourselves in the stories and find comfort in experiences so similar to our own.

## **Bountyfull Healing** *A Guide for the Broken-Hearted*

by Larry Mackey



FATHER LARRY MACKEY is a Catholic priest who has 30 years experience in treating various forms of addiction arising from people's experience of trauma or pain. In 1987, Fr. Mackey founded Bountyfull Counselling Society, located at Bountyfull House in Vancouver's downtown Eastside. It is a haven of hospitality, safety, and healing in the midst of drug addiction, alcoholism, the sex trade, poverty and AIDS.

Larry Mackey approaches his topic of healing and spirituality not as a detached professional, but as a “wounded healer,” one who personally has experienced the depths of pain and brokenness. He invites us to read and enter into the stories of Bountyfull Healing — narratives of despair and hope, pain and healing.

**Available on our website [www.bountyfullhouse.org](http://www.bountyfullhouse.org)**



# The fun of God

To find Jesus' humour you have to read between the lines

BY BARRY BALDWIN

"Holy books never laugh"

—BAUDELAIRE

"The total absence of laughter from the Bible is one of the most singular things in all literature"

—ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

The Sunday school Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild is a Victorian fabrication. The Gospels do not give — how could they? — Christ's every earthly moment. No one can possibly know if he ever laughed or not; it is hard to believe he did not at least smile at little children. Certainly, though, the real earthly Christ was a man of high emotions, everywhere evident in his In Your Face debates and oratory style not easily devoid of humour.

Church Fathers such as Jerome, John Chrysostom, Rufinus, and Salvian held fast that Christ never laughed. It stems from the fact that the only two New Testament mentions of laughter (Luke 6:21 and 25) occur in menacing contexts. According to Prof. Danuta Shanzer, "While one can write books on Greek Comedy or Roman Laughter, Christian Laughter would hardly make a leaflet." Elton Trueblood, a rare modern detector of Christly wit, suggests that Jesus' humour depends on a combination of ideas rather than words. Hence, lexical statistics do not tell the whole story.

D. S. Barrett has pointed to the one-upmanship humour manifest in Jewish literature of Jesus' time. Allan Gould regards the Hebrews' rebuke of Moses, "Are there no graves in Egypt, that you took us out here to die?" (Exodus 14:11) as history's oldest joke. Old Tes-

tament humour is explored in William Whedbee's *The Bible and the Comic Vision*. When Jesus instructs Peter on paying taxes (Matthew 17:27), he is speaking "in imaginative and humorous terms." All this places Jesus firmly in the long tradition of Jewish joking.

I ask readers to open Matthew for full texts and contexts. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:7) verbally coruscates. The Beatitude on the meek (Matt. 5:5) prefigures Orwellian 1984's Freedom is Slavery and other



paradoxes. The Greek pun on "salt of the earth" (5:13) is a popular one from Byzantine literature.

Like *Hamlet*, this Sermon abounds in modern quotations: Judge not, lest...; mote and beam; pearls before swine; sufficient unto the day...; by their fruits...; seek and ye shall find. No wonder "the people were astonished" (7:28), as also by his words at 13:54 and 22:3, equivalent to their amazements (8:27, 9:8, 21:20) at his miracles.

In an angry mood (11), Jesus likens sinful contemporary communities to

Sodom, his way of saying you bums (literally). More verbally crude is apropos gluttony (15:17) "Cast out into the lavatory." Likewise, the Greek diminutive *Kynaria* in his objection (15:26) to giving children's food to dogs betokens contemptuous distaste.

When the Pharisees (22:15) wondered how to catch him out (the Greek verb *pagideuo* is restricted to this passage and the Septuagint) Jesus hoists them with their own petard with "Render unto Caesar..." They marvelled at his debating skills; the audience surely smiled or guffawed.

A fresh outburst (23) against scribes and Pharisees abounds with more on-the-offensive humour against Jewish prayer rituals ("Make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments") and legacy-hunting, also a popular pagan moralist-satirist theme.

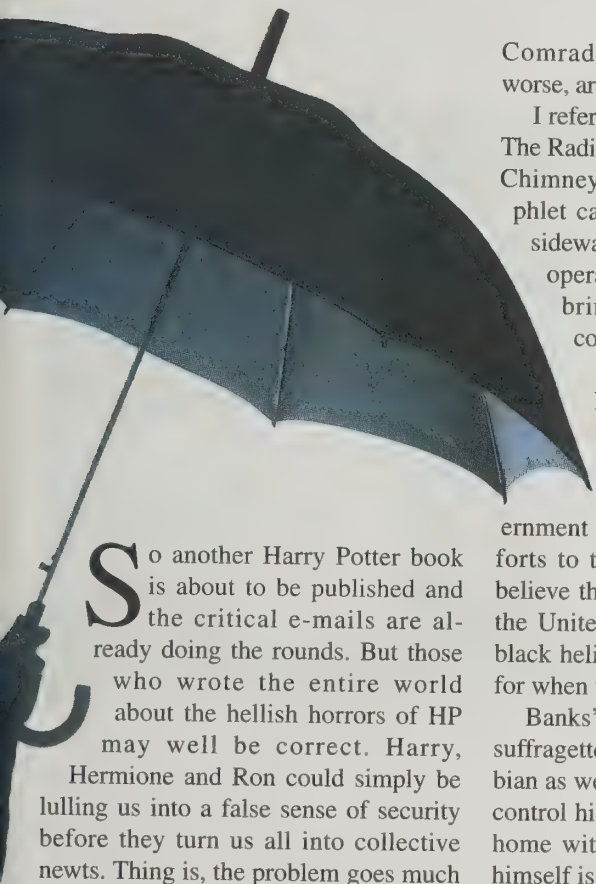
Christ's "Thou sayest" riposte to Pilate's "Art thou the King of the Jews?" is seen by Shanzer as "clever cheek," tantamount to You Said It, Baby; another scholar, Walter Goffart, compares it to a similar Talmud exchange.

Only Matthew (16:18) has the famous word-play (could it really have been said or received with straight faces?) on Simon Peter's name: "Upon this rock I will build my church." Modern agonizing over its meaning is needless. The Greek is evidently comic, *Petros* (Peter) denoting a pebble, *Petra* an entire rock. So, the church, then, particularly the Catholic branch, is built upon a pun. ☸

Barry Baldwin is Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Calgary and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

# Supercalifragilistic issues

*Homelessness and helplessness are more important than Harry and Hermione*



So another Harry Potter book is about to be published and the critical e-mails are already doing the rounds. But those who wrote the entire world about the hellish horrors of HP may well be correct. Harry, Hermione and Ron could simply be lulling us into a false sense of security before they turn us all into collective newts. Thing is, the problem goes much further than J. K. Rowling and all her sordid works.

Take Mary Poppins for instance. The woman is unmarried, strong-willed and independent. Thus a feminist and almost certainly a lesbian. She uses magic, witchcraft and levitation to tidy houses, do dishes, make beds and the like. She also flies around holding some sort of umbrella and a large bag. One can only imagine what is contained in that carpet full of hideousness.

She has a very close relationship with Bert, the leader of a gang of chimney-sweeps, a radical special interest group or, let's be candid here, a labour union. In short, Mary Poppins is in love with a dangerous Marxist-Leninist intent on world revolution and enforced atheism.

Comrade Bert's ties to the NDP or worse, are frightening to say the least.

I refer you to "What Is To Be Swept? The Radical Solution To The State of the Chimney-Sweep," by Bert. The pamphlet calls for an alliance of sweeps, sidewalk artists and merry-go-round operatives to fight the system and bring down capitalism and bad cockney accents. Enough said.

Poppins' employer is Mr. Banks, who is a highly placed banker and thus part of a huge Masonic conspiracy dedicated to one-world government and allied to Satan in his efforts to take over the world. Experts believe that the bank donates money to the United Nations and has purchased black helicopters in readiness for, well, for when the time comes.

Banks' wife, Winnifred, is a radical suffragette and thus may well be a lesbian as well. The fact that Banks cannot control his spouse and make her stay at home with his children shows that he himself is weak and effeminate.

That Mrs. Banks, or is it Ms. Banks, is out campaigning instead of making dinner for her family makes her a disgrace as a mother and, now I think about it, definitely a lesbian. Perhaps she and Poppins know one another as fellow members of some secret and perverse cult.

The Banks' children became lost at one point in the story and had to be brought home by the police. Their so-called parents, who no doubt believe that there are alternatives to a good spanking with a stick, are obviously not beating them frequently enough. For all intents and purposes this is Communism. "Suffer the children." Precisely.

Those same children's reference to "Let's Go Fly A Kite" is not as harmless as it seems. Various Internet experts

have informed me that the phrase is in fact an esoteric reference to devil worship. The word Kite in an ancient tongue meaning, "One who is frightened by everything new, ignores real problems and obsesses about nothing."

Then we have Uncle Albert. This reprobate seems to be drunk all the time and drinking alcohol is a sin arguably worse even than feeding the birds without parental permission. His uncontrollable laughter is the work of the evil one, an old weapon of Lucifer. Put simply, anyone who laughs is a friend of Beelzebub. I personally have never laughed and never intend to do so. Indeed my wife has strict instructions to hit me over the head at even the merest hint of a giggle. Can't be too careful.

A final word. On my way to protest outside the local bookstore selling copies of the new Harry Potter I had to detour around several homeless people living on the street, a drug-ridden prostitute standing on the corner, an unemployed individual offering to do absolutely any job for money and a preacher talking about love, humanity and understanding.

The fact that thousands of unborn children are being aborted, that genuine marriage is under attack by the courts, culture and addled politicians, that materialism and decadence combine to rape what is good and noble, all this is irrelevant compared to the tragedy of a children's book.

And just in case you think I'm over-reacting and find what I say to be amusing, be very careful and mindful. Remember, they laughed at Donald Duck too. ☺

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Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# Grow or die

*Grow your church by adding a new product line*

BY W. OWEN THORNTON

**T**he number of Presbyterian churches in London, Ont., has not changed in at least a decade and the collective roll from 1999 to today shows a downwards trend, but the city's population is larger. We're not only losing ground numerically, we're serving a significantly smaller percentage of the population. In the lingo of business, we're dying!

In the world of business Grow or Die is a theme which management consulting firms thrive on. Consultants suggest that if businesses cease growing they are automatically dying. Trainers, coaches and business gurus sell their services to facilitate corporate growth by helping to introduce new product lines, making acquisitions or finding mergers. "It seems to be true that there is no such thing as stability. Even when you think you're holding your own, you're probably losing ground," says Greg Schinkel, owner of Unique Training and Development, and a member of the visionary team at Metropolitan United Church, London (the UCC's largest roll with 2,000 people). In London, three struggling Anglican congregations merged to create one single thriving church. Schinkel and his church's plans for growth will acquire members from other denominations in addition to finding those who are currently unchurched. His church does not see anything wrong with growth because in the end, it all benefits the body of Christ.

Alice Mann, in her book *Raising the Roof*, says even the way we sit in church can exclude newcomers. People tend to sit approximately one third from the front of the sanctuary to the back of the church, and we sit on the aisles. Newcomers normally arrive right on time



and either have to shuffle past people to sit in the middle or walk up to the very front row. You might as well place a spot-light on them the moment they arrive. Could existing members make newcomers feel welcome by sitting up front and in the middle of rows thereby letting newcomers slip in gracefully?

We think we're friendly and welcoming while non-attenders perceive our buildings as closed shops for members only. I ask those who enter our church if my church is friendly and they say yes. The problem at large, especially concerning the unchurched, is we don't know what these people are thinking. Why? Because we never meet them, and we don't do enough outside our walls to help break down the barriers. In another example, folks who recently joined my own church said it took two years to work up the courage to approach the doors. Once they did, they felt very welcome... but not before that!

In Manfred Kets de Vries and Danny Miller's book *The Neurotic Organization* they suggest that corporate or church struggles are the same as the individuals who work and worship within them. For example, businesses suffer from mid-life crisis just as people do. Employees can suffer from four and seven year itches with their employers, just as married couples struggle through these awkward times. Perhaps the Presbyterian Church is suffering from old age... hanging on until the end.

The good news is people are looking for answers that life has not provided for them and that God can. And we still do have the best deal in town: that of peace and forgiveness of sins for a personal relationship with God. It's just a matter of spreading the news. ☺

Owen Thornton is an elder at Westmount, London, Ont. He is a professional writer and trainer with a special interest in evangelism and church growth issues.

# Superglue and wayward youths

*Tales of mischief prove God has a sense of humour*

I was a crazy kid. Teachers didn't appreciate me and my parents wondered if there was hope for me. The trouble with being a crazy kid is that God has a sense of humour and one day He may give you some children of your own. The other night after scolding my sons and sending them to bed snackless, I sat in the living room, wondering if there's any hope at all for my descendants. "Do you ever wonder," I asked my wife, "what will happen to a generation that doesn't even know which way to wear their hats? Or how high to pull their pants? A generation raised on Nintendo and Eminem?"

"I sometimes worry about the kids," admitted my wife. "Because, well Honey, they're a lot like you."

Thankfully the phone interrupted our conversation.

The caller was a friend I hadn't seen in years. Would I care to join him and a few others for a friendly game of floor hockey? Quicker than you can say cardiac arrest, I said yes.

By the end of round one my face was roughly the color of a ripe plum. "I think I pulled some fat," I told my teammates, and suggested we retire to my house for a healthy snack, namely pop and chips. The suggestion was welcomed by two childhood buddies. The three of us were trouble when we were kids. Saturdays we took black felt pens and added a single consonant to garage sale signs so that they read Garbage Sale. We used to sneak into the church nursery and place limburg-er cheese in diapers. Once we called the morgue to inform them that Mr. Amstutz, our tenth grade math teacher, was dead.

As we enjoyed our snack that night we told tales of super-gluing salt-shakers to restaurant tables, of signing

classmates up for the military, and the strategic placement of outhouses, whoopee cushions, shaving cream, and Saran Wrap. "Most of the stuff we did you couldn't put in print," admitted Dave. "My teachers hated me. Every



**'I was chased by security guards, banned from talent shows, and kicked out of Bible college...and that was during one of my better weeks'**

time I turned around they spanked me. You check the dictionary for brat and you'll find my high school picture."

Pete's list of accomplishments rivaled Dave's. "I was chased by security guards, banned from talent shows, and kicked out of Bible college...and that was during one of my better weeks. On countless nights my parents lay awake wondering when the police would call. And praying for the day I'd come home."

God heard those prayers.

"On my 20th birthday God got my attention," Pete told us. "I was going 80 miles an hour on a motorcycle when we

crashed. I was lying in the ditch unconscious and I had this dream where everything was pitch black. I knew I was going to hell. When I woke up, I decided to give up running. And come home for good."

Today Pete is senior pastor of a Baptist church. He just named his firstborn daughter Karis — Greek for grace. And Dave? Well, he's quit taunting his teachers, and joined them. When he isn't playing practical jokes on the natives, he teaches the Bible to a remote tribe in Papua, New Guinea.

Pete and Dave know a few things for sure. They know that God has a great sense of humour, that He loves nothing more than watching wandering boys come home, and they'd tell you anytime that their lives have never been more exciting than they are right now.

The clock moved toward one as we said goodnight. The children were asleep, so I slipped silently into their rooms, placing a soft hand on their heads, and praying, "Dear God, Thank you that there's hope, after all. That you delight in changing people. Will you do as much for my kids? Will you take their energy, and shape it for good? And may they find in me something worth imitating? And may they find in you everything they'll ever need to make a mark on this old world."

On the way to bed, I switched off the kitchen light and pulled aside a curtain. Sure enough. Pete and Dave were still in the driveway, the hood up.

I guess they hadn't found the potato I put in their exhaust pipe. ☺

Phil Callaway, editor of *Prairie Bible Institute's* *Servant* magazine, is a popular speaker and best-selling author. Visit him online at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)



# Sunday morning dysfunctions

*Service is not memorable for the preacher but for the people in the pews*

BY ANDREW FAIZ

I have probably witnessed in excess of 1,500 sermons over the past 35 years. Of those, I remember about a dozen vividly. There's another two dozen, maybe, of which I have some residual memory. The older I get, the more sermons I hear, the more I want to be challenged. I grow weary of safe, predictable interpretations; I am tired of brow-beating mean-spiritedness; bored with clichéd punch lines; I yawn at sickly sincere limousine lefties. Are we too polite as Christians, or specifically as Presbyterians, or perhaps as Canadians, to question the value of Sunday service? Perhaps we have a life long training in genuflecting to the clergy — regardless of what they say must be so?

Rarely if ever do I carry the service or the sermon with me past coffee-hour. Of the sermons I remember vividly, two are because the preachers were dopes. Both of those, coincidentally, happened to be at weddings. In one the minister, half way through the sermon, realized that leave and cleave — the woman shall leave her family and cleave to her husband — rhymed. He couldn't let this realization pass, and used the rhyme every third sentence. In the other ceremony the minister cautioned the bride, "Yes, Tony likes to play the horses, but be thankful that when he wins he brings you home a nice dress." That advice was given in 1999!

Another sermon I remember dates back 30 years in which the minister spoke of the thoughts that flow out of congregants' minds during service. He pointed to the church rafters and told us if we looked carefully we could see expensive things, shiny things, sexy things and a lot of other non-churchy wishes that were released from us during worship. I have been looking up at church rafters for

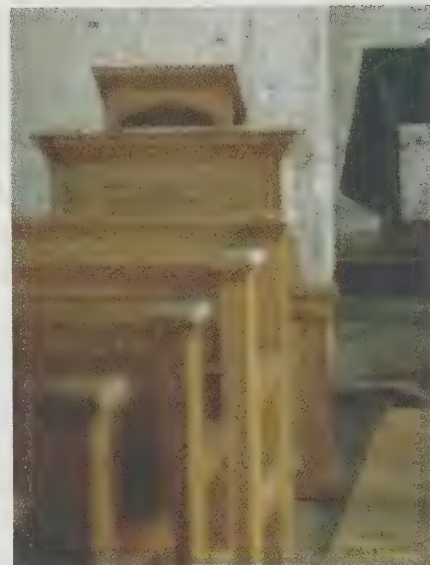
years now; and, yes, sometimes I do see those objects. Often my own thoughts.

I remember one service from the early-1980s. I was tired, probably a little hung-over (church would be a lot easier if it didn't follow Saturday night). It was Communion Sunday and that little piece of bread and that little cup of grape juice filled me completely. I still can recall the feeling inside my body as the elements transformed my physical state. I wait for that each time I take the body and the blood.

But often Sunday morning seems more a duty than a delight. I know that most ministers work hard on their sermons and prayers. I know they take Sunday service very seriously, but, and I don't think I'm alone in this, it rarely deepens, strengthens, maintains or clarifies my spirituality. If anything, it seems at times to dent my faith. I find most preaching to be condescending — paternalistic, if you would like, though the attitude isn't limited to males. I'm guessing that has something to do with the way ministers are taught.

In short, this weekly activity, arguably the most powerful cumulative cultural experience in society, is a dud. And I find that interesting. Everything in our culture is rated and judged: movies, books, jobs, colleagues, food, clothes, professors, cars, diapers. In a culture overwhelmed by choices we constantly need tools to help us focus — consumer magazines, daily newspapers, TV shows are filled with advice on what to buy, where to get it, how to get it.

And, yet, when it comes to our church experience, we just take it. (A by-product of the paternalism, perhaps?) There is a website — [www.shipoffools.com](http://www.shipoffools.com) — that offers some reviews of Sunday services,



**Are we too polite as Christians, or specifically as Presbyterians, or perhaps as Canadians, to question the value of service?**

everything from the greeter, the pew, the sermon, to the coffee. The list of questions is instructive. (Sadly, there are no reviews of Presbyterian services, but perhaps one of you could correct that.) We cleave to our congregations for a variety of personal reasons. We stay because our fellows in the pews become our family; and Sunday service is merely the dysfunctional weekly gathering of the clan. The sermon, the price we have to pay for coffee hour. ☺

Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the Record. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca). This column and all other editorial material in the magazine is available at [www.presbyterian-record.ca](http://www.presbyterian-record.ca).

# Ratzinger not so ecumenical

BY LEE MCKENNA DUCHARME

I was intrigued by the laudatory words for the ecumenical pope in the May and June issues. As an activist and international trainer in conflict transformation and economic literacy, I have a snapshot or two that suggest a less praiseworthy impact of John Paul II's pontificate on ecumenical relations. The anti-communist passions that supported the rise of *Solidarnosc* and the fall of totalitarian communism in Poland and elsewhere were manifest in Latin America in a hard-edged suppression of liberation-theology-inspired dissent; Leonardo Boff and Archbishop Romero of El Salvador come to mind. Under John Paul II, progressive Catholics lamented his intransigence, even retreat, on several issues, one of them being ecumenical relations.

I was in Chiapas in January 2001 in the course of post-Acteal-massacre efforts to build space for reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. At Acteal in December 1997, Protestants had killed 45 Catholics, mostly women and children; it was dismissed from Mexico City as a family feud. Amongst the accused were 34 pastors and lay leaders from Presbyterian, Assembly of God and Pentecostal churches. On one of my visits to Mexico I sat across the table from the Presbyterian pastor who had blessed the guns on the altar of his church before they were used in the massacre. At the table as well was one of the leaders of Las Abejas, the pacifist community whose members were killed. Everyone knew the Presbyterian pastor's responsibility, yet the conversation continued for many months, eventually breaking down, mostly on issues related to who exactly was in Cerro Hueco, the prison, charged or not charged with the crime.

## On one of my visits to Mexico I sat across the table from the Presbyterian pastor who had blessed the guns on the altar of his church before they were used in the massacre

Three months earlier, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (headed by the current pope, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) had issued its statement entitled *Dominus Iesus* which asserted that ecclesial communities that have not preserved a "valid episcopate and Eucharist... are not churches in the proper sense," and that the Church of Christ continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church.

We were sitting at kindergarten-sized chairs and tables in an elementary school, mostly religious sisters and a representative or two of a local NGO, our partner in this project of peace-seeking. We were talking about the status of the school and how it had been used recently to bring together Catholics and Protestants, mostly Presbyterians, Zapatista, Abejas and PRI communities, from the Lacandón, Chenalhó, and beyond. The stories were remarkable.

Then I asked, "But tell me, how has *Dominus Iesus* been felt in this process?" There was a hush. Then the sisters began to speak animatedly. Terrible. Awful. Now the evangelica/os are asking us: why should we come? Why should we believe you that you want peace and reconciliation within a shared faith when you don't believe we are even Christian? It has set ecumenical reconciliation back years, they said. The new bishop, Arizmende, who had replaced the dearly beloved Bishop Samuel Ruiz the week before, had preached a barn-burner in the Cathedral in San Cristóbal de las Casas in favour of the exclusivist message of the document.

(Though beloved by his Catholic

indigenous flock, whose languages he had learned to speak, Bishop Ruiz was considered a subversive by Archbishop Girolamo Prigione, the Mexico City-based nuncio. Ruiz, from the early years of his 40 year bishopric as part of those who first articulated the theology of liberation in a gathering in Medellín in 1968, the one the people called Papa, taught, wrote and preached liberation, challenging the Vatican's co-option and dilution of the terms of that debate. His expected successor, Raul Vera, who had been sent there as a Vatican spy to undermine Ruiz, but who came to love, admire and participate in the pastor's work, was instead ordered shipped off to the northern deserts of Chihuahua.)

*Dominus Iesus* made a difference to that process played out far from the Vatican in the altos and valleys of southern Mexico. There were, indeed, other factors that contributed to the collapse of these efforts, but that was a critical and dispiriting one. An apparently innocuous document that passed unnoticed in many quarters, though vehemently denounced by Hans Kung and Leonardo Boff, it reignited the fears and mistrust that have marked so much of Catholic-Protestant relations in Chiapas. ☸

Lee McKenna duCharme is a graduate of Knox College and a PhD candidate at the Toronto School of Theology. She is an international trainer in conflict transformation and economic literacy and an organizer in the health care sector.

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of the Presbyterian Record but of the author's.



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# The Presbyterian Opinion

*(There is no such thing,  
they're much too nice.)*

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# Sun sets on Flames

## Seeking sanctuary in Scotland

BY CAROLINE LOCKERBIE

**I**t was Sunday morning, the setting a serious Church of Scotland Service in a formidable stone building several hundred years old. As the minister, I stood to read the announcement which the elder handed me. "Yesterday's kirk fayre was a huge success. Great crack was enjoyed around the tables." His face drained of all of its colour as he realized that my Canadian accent brought a somewhat North American interpretation to the Gaelic word *craik*. My Highland vocabulary was expanding, but not without a lot of concern on my part over what I had just read and gales of laughter from the congregation. *Craik* means a good chat, a conversation to catch up on all that has been happening.

About the same time as I was learning about Scottish *craik* and fresh North Atlantic haddock and eating shortbread in the summer, I received a request from Rev. Judee Archer Green to write an article for the *Record* to be used as part of Flames Year of Education. A decade ago, when the Long Range Planning Team gathered at church offices in Toronto to begin our work on what was to become the Flames Initiative, the thought of writing an article on *E: Education* was the furthest thing from my mind. Nor, did I even remotely consider the educational experience that would lead to this article.

At Knox College's 161st convocation Dr. John Douglas Hall reminded the graduates that in God's world, we are all life-long learners. As Christians our education comes both from The Book and from our experience in living out the theology of The Book. For four months in 2004, I had the opportunity to observe and study congregations within the Church of Scotland. The



Canadians at Iona beginning the Island Pilgrimage. Caroline Lockerbie is on the far left.

purpose of my venture was to learn about congregational amalgamation. I came home with a suitcase full of reports and procedures, but the real treasures were the adventures I had and the people I met.

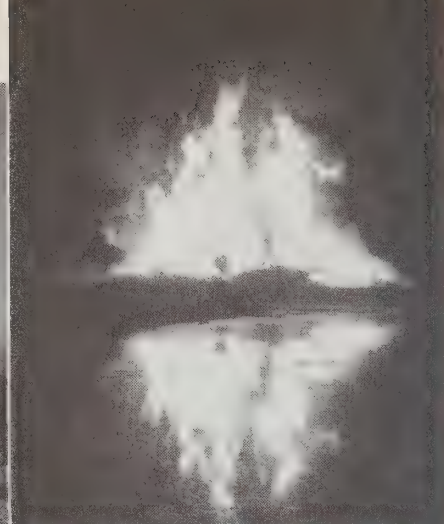
My first learning was to find Wick, Caithness on a map. Northeast Scotland, the jumping off spot for the Orkney Islands, was where I was appointed to assist in a the Wick Old Parish congregation and take part in its amalgamation process with the former Free Church congregation just a block away. The project was started in 1912, but now, supposedly, it was coming to fruition. Unfortunately, what I learned were the 15 new reasons to postpone it further. However, all was not lost. Within the presbytery there were some unique amalgamation plans being considered and they offered creative

potential for application in Canada.

In a denomination deplete of ordained ministers, in a remote presbytery where the clergy were doubly stretched, I served roles other than Sunday supply. Anticipating that I would participate in more than word and sacraments, the Clerks of Assembly assigned me the title Adopted Minister of the Church of Scotland. I trained and ordained four elders of the Raey congregation. History will tell us if the Presbyterian Church in Canada leaves a lasting imprint on that community.

I participated in the work of the Presbytery and moderated Session meetings, learning that the laws of the Church of Scotland are in some places identical to what I know and in others very different. One of my funeral sermons was reviewed in the local newspaper. My first reaction was that I had been misquoted.





**Trusted 21st-century technology amongst some of the oldest rock on the planet. The bluffs of Wick overlooking the North Sea. Above: Flames Reflection: From Wick Gala days, the closing bonfire and its reflection in the Wick River.**

Then I realized that the reporter had translated my words into Caithnesian and much later, further realized that he likely was getting to a more accurate rendition of what had originally been told to me by the family.

Then came alive those words from the Church Growth gurus who emphasize the need to learn to speak the language of our 21st-century audience. We have to be careful in our translations. I also gained a heightened awareness of the importance of using the scriptures in relation to context. Sheep and thus shepherds dominate the area, and brought new meaning to me, a city kid. In mid-July I was still wearing woolen stockings and at a graveside service while reading the words of committal "the sun shall not beat on them, nor any scorching heat," I began to wonder if the locals had any idea what scorching heat was.

It was as I struggled alongside fellow Christians coming to terms with the new reality of church life and its expression in the chaos of our generation that I truly sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. The economic conditions of Wick, combined with its remoteness made for a community vastly different from my home in Burlington, Ont. Yet, God appeared to be working in similar ways and people were experiencing the Spirit in the same way in both locales.

It was a reaffirmation for me that Christ is leading the people of his

church in a common journey. During my time in Wick I engaged in more than the ordinary life of the church. I took on a new role (for me) as a political activist. It was pretty basic and non-confrontational, but it led to meeting with several parliamentary representatives. I was part of NAG, the North Action Group, a citizens' movement in protest against the Highland Health Council's decision to close the maternity ward at the Wick hospital. The three hour drive through the Highlands to the nearest hospital in Inverness was treacherous even on a fine summer's day. Perseverance seems to have been successful, for a new board has been formed with a mandate to find a solution.

My final week was spent on the Island of Iona enjoying a modern interpretation of the ancient Celtic Community. More and more I am convinced that a serious study of the Celtic Christian expression would reveal for us new and exciting ways to be connected to the God of creation. Celtic spirituality is more than an exercise in nostalgia; it offers for us an authentic rediscovery of a community of faith practicing its Christian mission. While on Iona, I met six other North American clergy on some form of Sabbatical. The nature of my leave was perhaps unique, but I was surprised and encouraged to discover so many other church leaders doing similar kinds of study and regeneration.

I have returned a bit of a champion of the Sabbatical experience. Sabbatical rest is not only for clergy and church workers. Leaders in the congregation are due times of learning and refreshment. Relief from commitments without full-blown resignation should be seen as an acceptable alternative for long time holders of congregational offices and responsibilities. My circumstances allowed me to be away. My presbytery prescribes three weeks of study leave each year and over five years, it adds up. Combine it with vacation time and the weeks are there. I had just sold my home and thus was without maintenance issues on that front.

Although freeing in one respect, such homelessness led to another discovery. Constant moving becomes really stressful and the difficulty in getting services (such as a bank account) without a permanent address has led me to a greater appreciation for issues of homelessness. Education is a fundamental aspect of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. As *Flames* quietly settles, the embers of this seven year initiative will glow for me as a source of energy because of the opportunity I had to explore and to learn. May all of our people know the joy of learning and the experience of connecting to God through education. ✠

Caroline Lockerbie is minister of Strathcona, Burlington, Ont.



# Chock full of surprises

*Learning to embrace the grace of living out of control*

BY DAVID WEBBER

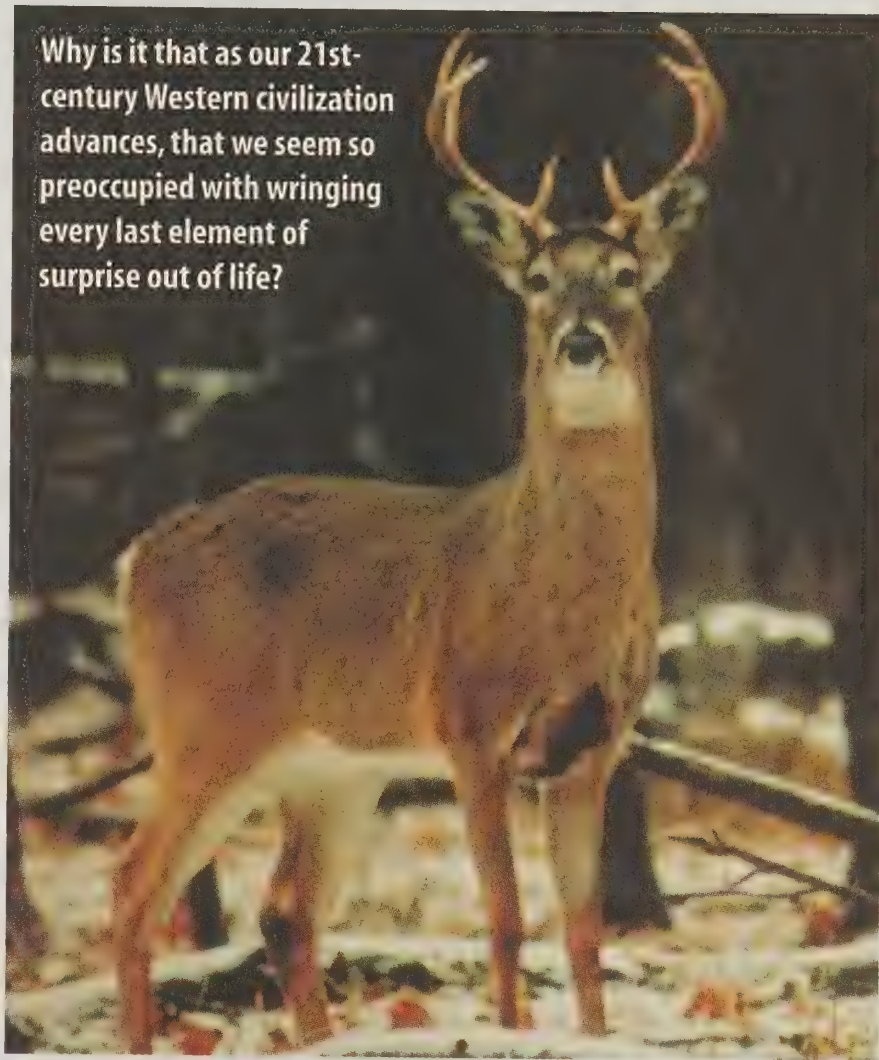
**B**oy did I ever get a surprise!" exclaimed Linda as she opened the door of our little travel trailer.

"That can't be good since you were out to the backhouse," I said. I was thinking large spiders or mice down the hole or a squirrel under the floor boards; all regular occurrences on trips to the outhouse at the remote mountain lake in the Chilcotin where we spend at least a couple of weeks each summer. One look at Linda's face however told me it was more than an arachnid or rodent encounter. Her Norwegian blue eyes were like saucers and flashing in pure delight.

"No silly, none of the regular stuff. On the way up to the backhouse this time, just as I got to the door I looked over my shoulder and standing at the log fence not 10 feet away was a 4-point mule deer buck. He must have been focused on feeding on the lush rosebushes while I was preoccupied with the purpose of my journey. At any rate, we both stood there with surprised looks on our faces before he batted his large brown eyes at me and proudly walked away. Wow! What a special surprise and gift for the day."

Over morning dishes, the deer story was retold in more detail and it inspired the retelling of other stories of past outhouse trips with Linda, Chelsea and myself all contributing. All of us had delightful stories to tell. What made them so enticing, both in the experience and in the retelling, was the surprise element. Either going to or coming back from the outhouse, one's mind is totally filled with the urgency of what one is about to do or the satisfaction of what one has just done. And it always seems, in our experience at least, that when nature calls nature provides. We have had more wildlife

**Why is it that as our 21st-century Western civilization advances, that we seem so preoccupied with wringing every last element of surprise out of life?**



surprises going to, sitting in or returning from the outhouse than on any other occasion. So much so that at one time I seriously considered adding outhouse safaris to my repertoire of hunting techniques but that would have ruined both the outhousing and hunting.

After breakfast dishes, I found a quiet place to ruminate and write. The element of surprise in life intrigues me. Why is it

that as our 21st-century Western civilization advances, that we seem so preoccupied with wringing every last element of surprise out of life? Everything we do seems to be ultimately aimed at turning life and every element in it into a controlled experience. We have computers that enable us to plan each day and forecast every outcome from each decision we make. We have communication de-



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vices that help us keep control of everyone and everything in our lives no matter the time or place. We have health planning regimens to take the physical elements of surprise out of life, living under the hope that we can somehow control every last ounce of life. We have living wills so that we can control not only how we live but also how we die and pre-arranged funerals so that we can control what happens after we die (heaven forbid that our families would surprise us after we are dead). We have insurance for everything we own, including the lives of our loved ones and ourselves, to provide for the unexpected: really to control the unexpected. We have birth control pills, and morning after pills for when we slip up; just so we don't have any little surprises show up in our families. We are such control freaks that when we do desire a tiny little element of surprise in our lives we choose a little gambling experience or extreme sporting encounter knowing full well that we can end the element of surprise by walking away from the game. But you know what, after all is said and done, after all the attempts to sanitize surprise out of life and control everything in life, life is still like a trip to the outhouse. Try as hard as you can, you can't control everything, and when you least expect it, SURPRISE!

This used to drive me nuts, literally. My first career was in forestry. Forestry is all about planning and controlling, both the forest and those who work in it. Being a control freak, it was right up my alley. By the time I was 25 years old I was a Woods Manager for a large Alberta forest company. I had thousands of hectares of forestland and a crew of 60 poor souls under my management. I had arrived at this job at least 10 years ahead of my time, mainly because I was willing to work 25 hours a day and eight days a week to control of all the forestry stuff and all the people stuff. As to control I was a driven perfectionist. It was my undoing. I burned out at 27, spending several weeks in hospital trying to figure out how to cope with the reality that no matter what I did, life is still like a trip to the outhouse; when you least expect it, Surprise!

That was pushing three decades ago now and before faith in Christ. In fact, that experience was a large part of what made

me seek faith in Christ. And I have to admit that when I came to faith in Christ, at first it was all about trying to cope with, no I have to be bone honest here, it was all about trying to control life's surprises. I kind of figured if Christ was Lord of all life and if I was Christ's, well that ought to render the surprise element of life at least benign. Benign surprises are almost as good as control. Two months after I was baptized into Christ, SURPRISE! I was diagnosed with a malignancy.

The cancer I was diagnosed with for my 29th birthday was a particularly virulent fourth stage of Lymphoma. The treatment was still in its infancy in the '70s and the prognosis for one as advanced as mine was not encouraging. My doctors told me that if I took a full year of very harsh chemotherapy and two full months of massive radiation treatments over the whole upper half of my body, I would have about a 50-50 chance of survival for two years. I looked at my two dear infant boys and my beloved young wife and vowed two things: I would take every last ounce of treatment regardless of how tough it got (and it got real tough) and I would learn a different way to live.

The story of my healing from cancer is a topic for another time (a book is currently in progress titled *Miracles That Have Changed Me*) but the point is that for me, learning a different way to live was all about finding a way to embrace life's surprises rather than trying to purge them or control them or render them inert. Learning a different way to live was all about discovering the grace of living out of control. And here is where Christ met me in a deep and personal way. Faith in Christ became something other than just another coping mechanism for life, whether it was life's sin, guilt or fear or surprises. It was Karl Marx who held that Christianity was the opiate of the masses, and faith that is just a coping mechanism is a lot like that. The problem with opiates (and I should know for I took lots of them during my cancer experience) is they just wear off and when they do you are right back to where you started from, except worse. What I discovered was that when faith met me through Christ in a personal way, it was a companion. Perhaps the most profound name used for Christ in Scripture is the Hebrew name

Immanuel, which literally means, God is your companion. This is God who gave Joshua the courage to move ahead into the immense unknown across the river. Immanuel is a name for Joshua/Jesus that puts flesh on the divine guarantee given to Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Solomon and Jeremiah: "I will be with you." The reality of the Risen Immanuel is that he is here with me, my companion through all of life. And when life is like a trip to the out-house, filled with the unexpected ... Surprise! I am not alone.

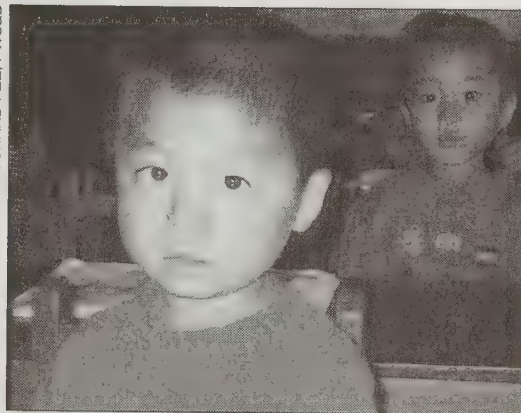
This makes all the difference. God as my companion in Christ goes way beyond the much-touted fundamentalist formula of personal Lord and Savior that seems to me is bordering on personal fire insurance. God as my companion in Christ is about the immediacy of God. It is about intimacy with God. It is about journeying with God. It is about the experience of discovering God with me in the midst of every surprise life pitches me and finding out that in His presence, with Him as companion, I really can embrace each and every part of life, even those bombshell, shocking, bolt from the blue, astonishing revelations. One of the great learnings for me was that with the companionship of God in the midst of my cancer experience, I was able to embrace the cancer experience as part of my life while I was going through it, and with no terms, no qualifiers. It seemed to give me the capacity to speed shift through all five of Dr. Kubler-Ross's stages of dying. This confused my doctor and others in the health team who were caring for me and convinced that I was stuck at the denial stage. But it allowed me to get on with out-living cancer, living one day at a time, excited to find what God and me were going to do next in living with it. And surprise! God healed me. And so far I have logged 26 cancer free years.

Really, life is like a trip to the out-house, chock full of surprises. The Lord is with you! Embrace each one. ☺

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

## PWS&D sends food at a critical time.

RICHARD FEE, PWS&D



**Children in Kaesong Orphanage, North Korea, who have been recipients of CFGB food shipments.**

On May 23, 2005, 10,000 tonnes of wheat from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank left Vancouver bound for North Korea. Another 1,320 tonnes of soya beans left in June. Worth over \$5.3 million, this food will help feed 895,000 pregnant and nursing mothers and children in orphanages, nurseries, kindergartens, and primary schools. The food left just as the United Nations reported that food shortages in North Korea were escalating to crisis levels.

PWS&D is the lead agency for CFGB food shipments to North Korea. Churches contributed over \$1 million for these shipments, and \$4.26 million came from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). "The shipment couldn't come at a better time," says JF Beauchesne, Canadian staff monitoring the distribution in North Korea. "The shipments will be key to combating high malnutrition rates across the country."

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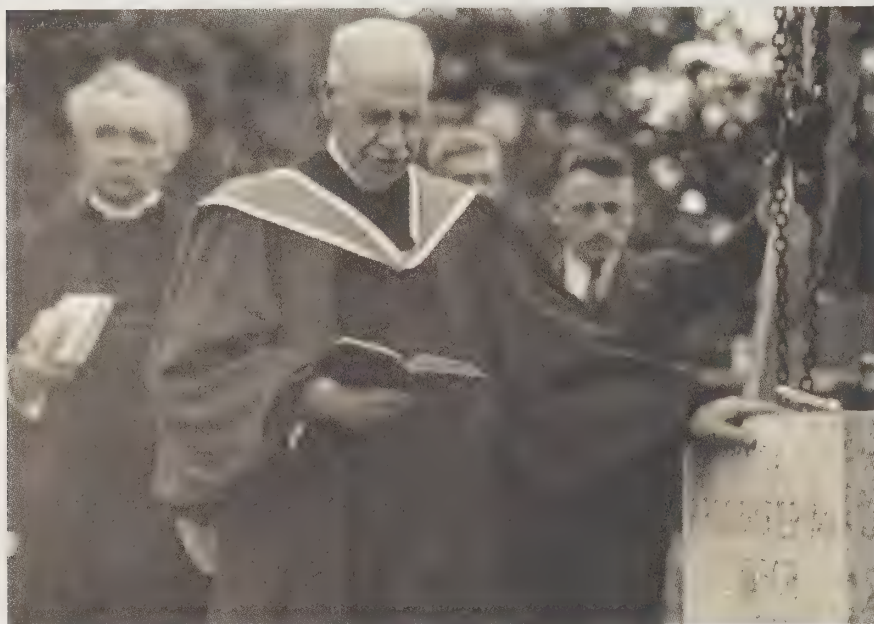
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# Linking mission to multiculturalism

*Pickering responds to diverse communities*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



**Former moderator Rev. Dr. J. S. Shortt blesses the cornerstone of Knox, Oshawa, June, 1934. Rev. D. Parry Jones, Knox' minister, is seen to the left.**

**T**he Presbytery of Pickering has figured out a recipe for growth: take a strong devotion to mission, add a generous willingness to adapt to change, and sprinkle with multiculturalism. Mix well.

Although formed only 16 years ago, the presbytery located just east of the city is doing well. In fact, its very creation is a story about growth — created out of the Presbytery of East Toronto to accommodate a rising population in the city's outlying areas. Between 2002 and 2003, the presbytery actually gained 169 adherents (although losing 58 members off the communicant roll). The growth of the geographic area plays a role in this increase. However, the commitment to mission, outreach and service to diverse communities also impacts the health of many of the presbytery's 27 congregations.

St. Paul's, Leaskdale, is a prime example. Established in 1862, they call themselves a "missional" church. "Everything we do has to make sense to the people outside the church walls," said Rev. Andrew Allison. The rural church sees as many as 300 people attend each Sunday — a huge jump from 35 in 1995.

"People are moving here from the city because they want to be connected," said Allison. "So we have life groups for just about anything from parenting, to marriage, to addiction recovery. As important as Sunday is, you can get lost in church. You need somewhere to plug in."

The congregation also raises grain for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a food aid organization supported by the Presbyterian Church. They use part of their vacant 100 acres, bought several years ago, to grow corn and winter

wheat. "The congregation is involved, but it also attracts people who are not connected to the church. The community is a big part of it." The rest of the 100 acres will eventually house a new church — a \$3.7 million project that's needed to accommodate growing membership. The congregation has already raised \$1.8 million.

The presbytery itself is a mix of old and newer congregations. Traditional Scottish blood is still prevalent in the presbytery's parishioners, like St. Andrew's, Scarborough, where an annual Robbie Burns dinner has been held with great enthusiasm since 1970, although the congregation has been around since 1818. The original pine trees, planted in 1887, still grow on the grounds. St. Andrew's-Chalmers, Uxbridge, also has deep roots, with more than 160 years of service.

Along with such rich Presbyterian roots a growing number of congregations also include multi-cultural contingents:

- Malvern, Scarborough, serves an often troubled neighbourhood, and outreach in the community is paramount to the congregation's mission. Special dinners and worship songs sung in other languages celebrate its myriad ethnicities. Amberlea, Pickering, has a large ethnic contingent, and celebrates them annually with a Caribbean night.
- Wexford, Scarborough, supports numerous outreach projects and is represented by more than a dozen countries of origin. Steel drums have been added to the worship ensemble, and May Day celebrations and pre-worship praise services are also included.
- Bridlewood, Toronto, has ESL courses and a Chinese Bible study.
- Guildwood, Scarborough offers an

After nine years with no permanent building, Knox, Oshawa, begins to take shape. Dignitaries gather for the laying of the cornerstone, June, 1934.



ecumenical Bible study group to reflect its diversity. Rev. Douglas Rollwage is the Presbyterian Church's representative to the Canadian Christian Jewish Council. Guildwood also helps kick off the community's annual Guildwood Day with a pancake breakfast at the church. The church's 307 members are heavily involved in local community events. New members, both young and old, are steadily joining the church.

- St. Andrew's, Whitby, is led by Jerusalem-born Rev. Issa Saliba who leads his congregation to serve the needy in the community by operating a small food and clothing bank as well as a Christmas hamper program. Volunteers help at St. Vincent's Kitchen in Oshawa, and the congregation supports Armagh, a facility that helps abused women, and Evangel Hall, a Toronto inner-city mission.

- Knox, Oshawa, also operates an in-house food cupboard and volunteers at St. Vincent's Kitchen. They also donate food packs to Gate 3:16 outreach centre, and recently installed two chair lifts to make the building wheelchair accessible. Formed in 1925, the congregation is currently redefining its mission, working with the synod mission consultant to discern a long-term vision for ministry.

- St. David's, Scarborough, was instrumental in the creation of St. David's Vil-

lage, a non-profit apartment residence for people aged 65 and over. The facility opened in 1979, while the church celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

- Fallingbrook, Toronto, recently decided to switch to fair trade coffee on Sunday mornings — an initiative bolstered by an article in the *Record*. Fair trade principles ensure farmers are paid a fair wage for their work, while the community often receives social support through coffee buyers. Although a slightly higher price than grocery store brands, the congregation decided the extra cost was worth it. "It was a thoughtful decision," said Elizabeth Thorsen, a member of the missions committee that trumpeted the idea. "I'm glad we did it. It's really important for people to see we practice what we preach."

- Melville, West Hill, celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002. To accommodate its approximately 300 communicant members, Melville holds two services on Sunday mornings — a practice that started in 1979. Consisting of a mainly WASP congregation set amidst a multicultural neighbourhood, Melville is constantly looking for ways to respond to this reality. With a steady infusion of immigrants and refugees being housed by the government in nearby motels, the congregation along with social agencies visits the newcomers.

It also offers a Mother's Time-Out program, which invites young mothers in the community to a learning and sharing morning while babysitting is provided. It is also one of the few Presbyterian congregations to employ a parish nurse, hired in 1999.

Although the Presbytery of Pickering is not without its problems and struggling congregations, the general feeling is that there are good things in store. "I think it's an excellent presbytery — there's a lot of caring," said Rev. Dr. Everett Briard, presbytery clerk.

As the presbytery looks to the future, responding to a growing ethnic popu-

lation will continue to provide opportunities for varying kinds of community service, as well as a chance to grow congregations. "There ought not to be any room in the church for colour distinctions," said Briard. "There can't be a 'we' and 'they' attitude. We serve everyone." ☪

## Montgomery's manse now a museum

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY, author of *Anne of Green Gables*, lived in the original manse at St. Paul's, Leaksdale from 1911 to 1926. Montgomery was married to Rev. Ewan Macdonald, who was the minister there in 1910.

Montgomery wrote 11 of her 22 novels in the manse, and wrote about her home in her memoirs. "It is not an ideal house by any means, but it will do," she wrote. "My greatest disappointment in connection with it is that it has no bathroom or toilet...But what is to be will be! It is Allah! We must submit!" (*The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, vol. II: 1910-1921*). The manse now belongs to the township of Uxbridge, and was declared a national historic site in 1997. It functions today as a museum.



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 North Bay, Calvin; Rev. Wallace Little, PO Box 983, Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0; 705-384-5453; awlitt@sympatico.ca. (effective July 31, 2005)  
 Palmerston, Knox; Drayton, Knox; Rev. Dr. Brice L. Martin, 190 Tucker St., PO Box 159, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0; bricelmartin@yahoo.com.  
 Sault Ste. Marie, Westminster; (Interim Minister) Rev. Dan Reeves; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.  
 Stayner, Jubilee; Sunnidale Corners, Zion; Rev. Keith Boyer; 27 Laurie Cres., Barrie, ON L4M 6C7; 705-735-9211; keb-cvb@sympatico.ca.  
 Thornton, Ivy; half time pastor (3-yr. Canada Ministries appointment); Patrick Voo; 110 Line 7 South, PO Box 8, Oro, ON L0L 2X0; 705-487-1998; pvoo@trinitycommunity.org.  
 Toronto, Patterson; Rev. Zoltan Vass, 439 Vaughan Rd, Toronto, ON M6C 2P1; 416-656-1342  
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 Uxbridge, St. Andrew's-Chalmers; Rev. Duncan Cameron; 115 St. Andrews Rd, Scarborough, ON M1P 4N2; 416-438-4370; scarboroughpc@allstream.net.  
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Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Interim Minister to begin April 2006; Rev. Terry Samuel, PO Box 587, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0; 519-542-2253; terry.samuel@sympatico.ca.

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Welland, St. Andrews; Rev. Douglas Schonberg, 8280 Willoughby Dr., Niagara Falls, ON L2G 6X2; 905-295-4231; minister@chippawapc.ca.  
Windsor, Chinese Church; Half-time, Cantonese-speaking; Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland, Windsor, ON N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627; paulinmemorial@on.aibn.com.  
Wyoming-Camlachie, St. Andrew's, Wyoming, Knox, Camlachie; Rev. Margaret Wisner, PO Box 391, Courtright, ON N0N 1H0; 519-867-5562; wallace.mw@sympatico.ca.

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#### Synod of Saskatchewan

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Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.  
Swift Current, St. Andrew's (full- or part-time); Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4V 1A4; 306-522-9571; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

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Medicine Hat, AB, Riverside; Rev. Dr. Bob Cruickshank, 504 2 St. SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0C6; 403-526-4542; st\_johns@telusplanet.net.  
Stony Plain, AB, Parkland First; New Church Development; Interim Moderator Rev. Glenn Ball, Sherwood Park Presbyterian Church, 265 First St., Sherwood Park, AB T8A 2G7; 780-464-2528; sherwoodparkpresby@shaw.ca.

#### Synod of British Columbia

Maple Ridge, BC, Haney Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Crowell, Vancouver School of Theology, 6000 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 1L4; 604-822-0638; pcrowell@vst.edu.

Victoria Chinese, (bi-lingual, English/ Cantonese), Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd. Victoria, BC V9C3A4, hamcnabb@shaw.ca  
Prince George, BC, St. Giles Presbyterian Church (vacant June 1st); Interim Moderator John Wyminga, RR 5, PO Box 6, Niyas Site, Quesnel, BC V2J 3H9; 250-249-9611; carpresb@uniserve.com.  
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All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: \$10 for the basic notice and \$1 per word for additional information. (There is no charge for congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)

**Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.**

## obituaries

**BLACKLOCK, Gordon**, aged 92 passed away January 25, 2005. A member of Eden Mills Presbyterian Church since 1932. He was an elder for 45 years. Sadly missed by family and friends.

**MERCIER, Amy Elizabeth** (Mello), May 6, 1903-April 25, 2005. Oldest member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Bermuda. Laid to Rest on April 30, 2005. "I have fought a GOOD fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith..." II Tim. 4:6,7.

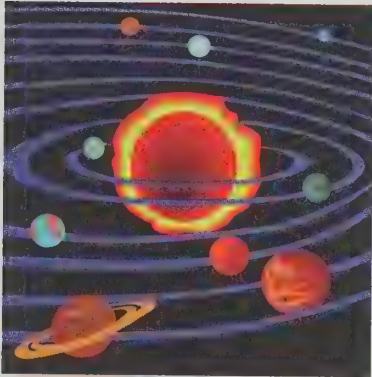
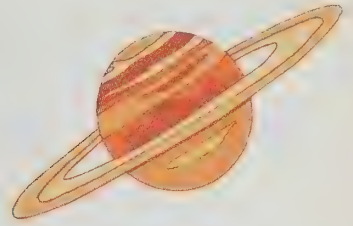
**PHILLIPS, Wilson Campbell**, P. Eng who spent a lifetime building structures and friendships across the west, has died at 79. He was good at both. Long-time member of three Kirks in Saskatchewan, First and St. Stephen's in Regina and St. Andrew's in Saskatoon, he attended the United Church after retiring to Lumsden, Sask. Survived by his wife Shirley (Durie) of Lumsden; David (Rhonda) of Lumsden, Scott (Vicki) of Calgary, Alta. and daughter Laura (Scott) McArthur of Calgary; two brothers Bob (Tanyss) of Saskatoon and Hugh (Joan) of Kelowna, B.C. and their families. His mother was Mayme Wilson of Clayton, Ont.; his father, W. H. Phillips of Regina, Sask. was, and his brother Bob, is an elder of the Kirk. Wilson was a member of Boards of Managers of several congregations.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.

**Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: obituaries@presbyterianrecord.ca**

# called to wonder

From "Cosmic Wonders" by Sandy Swartzen-truber, originally published in *The Banner* (May 2005). Reprinted by permission.



## Cosmic Wonders

Want to get an idea of how big God's love is?

Take a look at some pictures of space. Our universe is huge. It holds billions of galaxies. A galaxy like our own Milky Way holds billions of stars like our own sun. When you think about it, Earth is just a teeny tiny speck in the huge universe.

But God is so big that he's in charge of the whole universe. Stars, planets, galaxies—they all belong to God. But even with a huge universe to rule over, God still cares about every person here on Earth.

God cares about your feelings, your friends, and your family. God can help you with the smallest problem or the biggest decision.

We're all just tiny specks in space, but God loves each one of us more than we can imagine. The Bible says that God even knows how many hairs are on your head (that's about 100,000!).

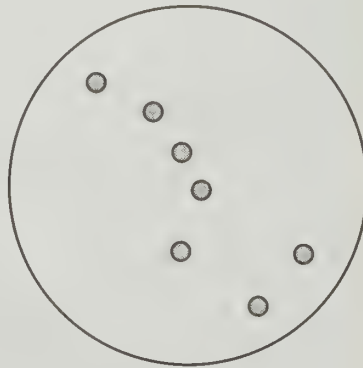
So take a look at space when you want to feel how big the love of God is.

Our universe belongs to God—and so do you!

### BIG DIPPER IN A CAN

The Big Dipper is one of the most famous constellations (groups of stars). Wanna take it with you wherever you go? Here's what you'll need to make your very own Big Dipper in a Can:

- Pattern of the Big Dipper constellation (see right) (you may want to enlarge it)
- Clean soup can, one end cut off
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Tape
- Small nail
- Hammer
- Flashlight



#### Directions:

1. Put the soup can upside down on a table.
2. Trace the pattern of the Big Dipper onto the tracing paper. Cut it out, FLIP IT UPSIDE DOWN, and tape it to the closed end of the can. (If you don't flip the paper over, your constellation will be backward.)
3. Use the hammer and nail to punch small holes in the can where the dots are on your tracing paper.
4. Now take the paper off. Shine a flashlight through the can to make the Big Dipper show up on the wall or ceiling in a dark room.

### SOLAR SYSTEM ROAD TRIP

Is your family going on a road trip this summer? Our solar system is the sun and the nine planets that circle it. Our solar system is only a very small part of space, but it's still huge.

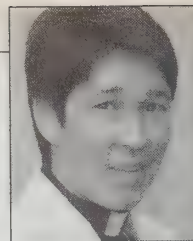
Stars and planets are very, very far away from each other, even though they look close in the night sky. For example, the distance from the Earth to the sun is 150 million km!

If you could get in your family's car and drive from the sun to the planets, here's how long it would take if you were going about 113 km per hour:

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| Mercury ..... | 57 years    |
| Saturn .....  | 1,396 years |
| Venus .....   | 106 years   |
| Uranus .....  | 2,809 years |
| Earth .....   | 152 years   |
| Neptune ..... | 4,400 years |
| Mars .....    | 223 years   |
| Pluto .....   | 5,700 years |
| Jupiter ..... | 762 years   |

Source: [www.dustbunny.com/AFK](http://www.dustbunny.com/AFK)





# Sharing and learning

*With anticipation and a desire to serve*

**I**t was my privilege to serve as moderator during the 131st General Assembly whose theme was Claiming the Joy of Our Faith. With the Assembly ended, I continue in office and have the unique opportunity to meet with people across Canada and beyond, learning and sharing about the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is my hope that the theme of this year's assembly will continue throughout the year.

While I continue as moderator of the 131st General Assembly, I will also continue in my day job as Director, Spirituality and Pastoral Care Ser-

berta, three seniors housing complexes, and community services to support seniors in their homes.

I am very grateful for Bethany's generosity to me, and to our church, in providing freedom and flexibility in my work so that I can fulfill my responsibilities as moderator.

It has become the custom for moderators to choose themes for the year. I have chosen three which reflect the context of my work but also have a wider expression throughout our denomination.

## Ministry with Seniors

According to Statistics Canada, by 2021 there will be 6.7 million Canadians over the age of 65, and those over 85 are, and will be, the fastest growing group. How is our church responding to the variety of pastoral and worship needs of seniors? And are congregations finding meaningful venues of service and discipleship for them? Also, is our church supporting the ever growing sandwich generation of working adults who face significant social and economic issues in caring for both young families and aging parents?

## Non-parish Ministries

While congregations are the primary way we organize and express the ministry of Christ, there are other areas of mission and ministry in which Presbyterians participate. *Living Faith* reminds us that Christ's ministry is expressed in the church and in the world. Chaplaincy, street ministry, parish nursing, administration, work with refugees, community based mission — these are some of the areas in which Presbyterians are engaged in gospel ministry. I look forward to

learning about these ministries and the ways in which we are claiming the joy of our faith through them.

## Ecumenism

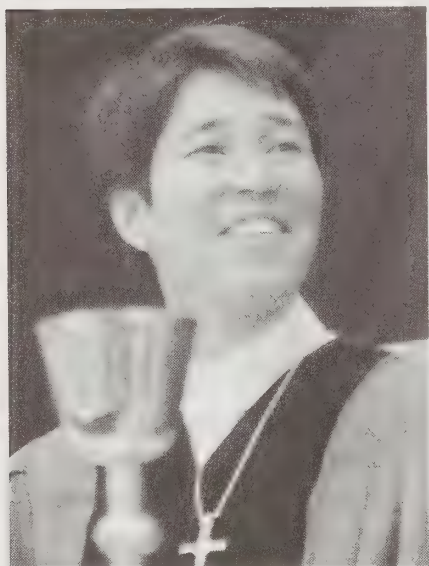
As part of the larger body of Christ, Presbyterians bring a unique contribution to ecumenical work and dialogue. Christian churches have, and must continue to work together effectively to accomplish shared goals in mission and to be a faithful witness to the world of the love of God in Jesus Christ. There are many wonderful relationships among Christian churches at local and regional levels and I am eager to hear about those shared endeavours and, I hope, be invited to participate in them.

A highlight of the assembly was meeting the ecumenical visitors and hearing their commitment to ongoing partnership with us. It was an honour to sign the covenant with the Reformed Church in Hungary, affirm the Covenant for Justice in the Economy and the Earth of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and to hear of the many ecumenical relationships in which we are engaged. To know ourselves as Presbyterians and therefore as brothers and sisters in Christ with other Christians is an important part of our identity.

It is with excited anticipation and a desire to serve the Presbyterian Church in Canada that I move into this year. I ask for your prayers and look forward to meeting with many of you in person and through this column.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jean Morris".



vices with Bethany Care Society, a not-for-profit, faith based provider of health and housing services for more than 3,400 seniors and other clients in Alberta. Inspired by Matthew 25, the work was begun in 1945 by five Lutherans who had a vision for providing care for those in need. From the first home for 19 residents, Bethany Care Society has grown to include six long term care centres in Southern Al-

by Barb Alston

# Next Year Country

There is the news story, the facts,  
the rains that fell  
Early one evening on the first day of June  
in an area of Manitoba. There is the weather,  
the winds, the rain,  
The torrents of water and the flooding. Then  
there is real life,  
Dealing with the aftermath, going on the best  
one can  
With life in a land which sometimes seems  
so very extreme.  
Our communities rely on production,  
On tiny seeds growing in the fields,  
On the feeding and selling of livestock fed  
from those fields,  
Our lives revolve around the seasons  
We depend on adequate rainfall, heat, an  
adequate growing season, sunshine  
Good management practices, so that weeds  
and insects don't  
Destroy our crops  
Some years we watch the sky and hope that  
the next cloud will bring rain  
Two years ago that did happen, but the  
clouds came and the clouds went  
All too often  
But talk to anyone who has been around any  
number of years growing crops On the prairies  
and they will say that they lost more crops to  
excess moisture Than to drought

After seeding is done, we adopt a wait and see  
attitude. Some of the seeds Will rot. Some of  
the young seedlings will die  
Maybe the high spots will be areas of high  
production even if the low spots Are lost  
It is a hard lesson in acceptance and realizing  
that much is beyond our Control. It is a lesson  
in being thankful for what we have  
Instead of angry over what we don't  
How do you approach this as a pastoral  
situation? I'm still learning from the Folks  
around me, people who have seen the seasons  
come and go,  
Who have been through this before  
and will go through it again no doubt.  
Conversation constantly turns to —  
how much rain did you get?  
What are your fields like? Where were you  
at in your seeding?

It is about survival. It is about doing the things  
you can do, like pumping Water out of your  
basement, or away from your house,  
Like raising the electric fence so that the wire  
does not touch the water.  
It's about fixing the fence that got ripped out as  
a torrent of water roared Down the ravine to the  
river. It is about putting on your rubber boots  
The tallest pair you have.

It is about recovering what you can  
And it is about waiting; it is about going on  
with the everyday things of life The best you can  
It is about hoping, hoping that  
Next year will be better  
After all we live and farm in next year country

---

Barb Alston is the minister at Melita, Manitoba.



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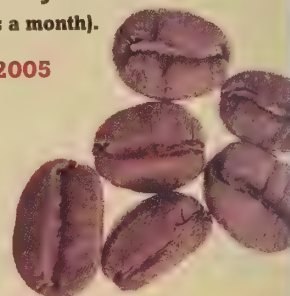
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# We can't afford to ignore poverty

Last year, Canada's economy generated about \$1.25 trillion dollars. Last year, Canada's economy grew by about \$30 billion. Last year, Canada had a federal budget surplus of about \$8 billion, the provinces another \$4 billion. Last year, federal debt charges declined for the fourth year in a row.

Last year, if Canada had met the UN standard (0.7 per cent of a country's gross national income) — set in 1969 with instrumental support by the late Lester Pearson — we would have contributed about \$8.7 billion to international aid. Instead, last year, Canada spent about \$3 billion in foreign aid. This year, the federal government plans to spend only a little more, about 0.34 per cent of our gross national income on foreign aid.

Challenged during this summer's Live 8 concerts to increase that to the Pearson standard, Prime Minister Paul Martin said the country can't afford such an increase, that it would threaten our financial stability, that it would put us into debt.

Can't afford??? At the very least, the prime minister is guilty of faulty logic in suggesting that Canada, by any measure one of the richest nations on the Earth "can't afford" to give less than a cent of every dollar to foreign aid. At worst, his nose might be in danger of becoming part of the softwood lumber dispute.

Perhaps even more troubling, however, were the subsequent surveys that suggested about six in 10 Canadians supported Mr. Martin's views. I'm not certain about the wording of the questions, but even so, it appears that Canadians are woefully ignorant about what we can afford as a nation and what we should be doing to support those whose lives are infinitely less fortunate than ours through no fault of their own and no virtue on our part.

In 2003, a study by *Foreign Policy* magazine and the independent Centre for Global Development in Washington, D.C., measured "foreign aid, openness to international trade, investment in developing countries, openness to legal immigration, contributions to peacekeeping operations, and responsible environmental practices."

At the top of the list were the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal and New Zealand. At the bottom? Canada, Australia, the United States and Japan.

That ought to have embarrassed us as a nation. Instead, our national pride seems to hang on winning international hockey championships. And isn't it slightly worrying that what drives any discussion about these issues are mostly aging rock stars? Mostly foreign aging rock stars?

But can't afford a few farthings? No, one might debate the particular figures, one might debate the aid mechanisms, one might even debate whether poor Africans or only the "big men" in their Mercedes (a.k.a. dictators and politicians) will benefit from an increase in aid.

There is much to debate about how best to help other countries, but there is no debate about whether Canadians can afford to do more. Much more.

For Christians — and Jews and Muslims, for that matter — the issue is even more acute. The pattern in the Bible is not

**There is much to debate about how best to help other countries, but there is no debate about whether Canadians can afford to do more; much more**

only to support those who are economically deprived, but to run the economy according to just principles.

As reported inside on our international news pages, Archbishop Desmond Tutu recently raised this latter point about a just economy in a commentary on the G8 aid package being promoted by Britain. "The Group of Eight started well with cancelling [US]\$40 billion worth of debt," Archbishop Tutu wrote in an editorial prior to the summit. "Now let them continue in that direction and change the trade laws."

A study by Oxfam a few years ago noted that if sub-Saharan Africa had been able to maintain its exports at the same level as in 1980, its economy would be worth an extra \$350 billion a year. Moreover, the World Bank estimated that trade barriers in rich economies costs poor nations more than \$120 billion a year, about twice what those rich countries give in aid.

Over the last decade, many Christians have been heard to bemoan that their voice isn't being heard in the public square. There is some truth to this, but perhaps we haven't been challenging ourselves on what really matters.

This is a thread some of our youth writers in this issue address, including the Make Poverty History campaign. One puts it this way: "I wonder what has become of my religion when its leaders preach more on popular culture than the starving millions in sub-Saharan Africa?"

We need urgently to discuss the problem of those starving millions. Then, maybe, Christians will be able to correct the prime minister's mistaken view that we can't afford to give a little more.

David Harris





Matt Shmonds from St. Paul's in Leaksdale, Ont., and two admirers at Escuela Joyas de Cristo in Hainamosa, Dominican Republic.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

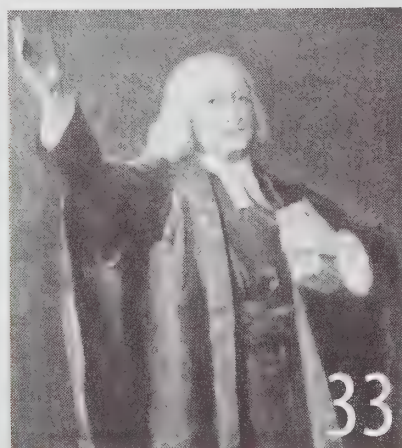
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**On the cover:** Shanna Bush and  
Nicki Waines both from St. Paul's  
in Leaksdale, Ont., with a friend  
at Escuela Joyas de Cristo in  
Hainamosa, Dominican Republic.

## China not yet ready for ministers

*Re. China Seeks Ministers For Post-Denominational Church, June*

The days to send Presbyterian ministers to mainland China will come only after the Chinese government is willing to sit down and sign a written and binding partnership agreement with The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and Presbyterian missionaries and ministers are provided and protected under the policies and procedures of International Ministries.

The footprints on the Silk Road left by those who are determined to bring the gospel are soaked with tears, scars, humiliation and whippings. While sporadic overseas delegates are entertained with royal treatment in fancy hotels with exotic cuisine, a number of Chinese Christians are still lamenting in pain and prayers in solitary confinement. While occasional foreign religious dignitaries are escorted to view big crowds in big churches in big cities, a Christian prayer meeting with brothers and sisters from overseas in a remote rural community still has to be approved by the Religious Affairs Bureau, Public Security Bureau, Propaganda Department and United Front before the opening prayer is permitted. So often, the application is turned down with a conviction of "disturbing social order and threatening the civil society."

I agree with the ending remark in the article that the regulations on religious affairs are viewed by many to tighten the government's grip on the Christian community. It has been a discouraging reality for The Presbyterian Church in Canada

not being able to keep one Presbyterian missionary or minister inside mainland China. But let us encourage each other with confidence and commitment that "a tight grip often symbolizes a weak hand."

*Rev. Peikang Dai  
Toronto*

## Why is school on the cover?

I am a member of the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team and a Board member of the Winnipeg Inner City Missions. I am also a First Nation woman of Kenora, Ont., who is a residential school survivor of the Cecilia Jeffrey School.

After spending a year travelling across Canada with the design team on this very sensitive issue of residential schools and the negative impact it had on First Nations people, why has the *Record* put a picture of a residential school on its cover? That school was torn down as part of the healing process.

*Vivian Ketchum  
Winnipeg*

*Editor responds:* While the healing and reconciliation team and some others in the church have spent a great deal of time on this issue, it was clear at this year's General Assembly how little it is understood by most people in the Presbyterian Church. We put the school on the cover with the text stating Aboriginal Ministry a Priority to draw attention to this history that needs to be faced. The healing that has been achieved and the wounds that

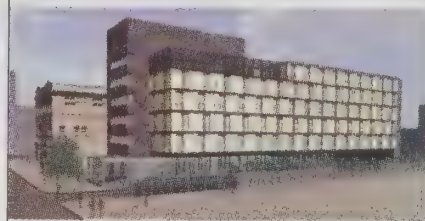


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*Letters continued*

remain are a by-product of what happened at that school. The cover is a symbolic representation of the past with a declaration about the future.

The July/August issue headlined the fact that assembly declared aboriginal ministry to be a priority of the church. It also noted debate between the workers who wanted existing efforts to be strengthened and the denominational leaders who wanted additional structures to be put in place with additional money. For me it was déjà vu.

In 1975 in Montreal, General Assembly declared francophone work to be a national priority of the denomination. However, no one seemed to know how to go about making that priority a reality. Support for existing ministries would have been wonderful. Hiring secretaries, for example, to ease the administrative burden of the francophone workers already in place would have been a great help. But the Board of World Mission's administrators were convinced that what was needed was a national director of French work with appropriate funding. Also a couple of Sunday bulletins in French (with English subtitles!) were produced. The final outcome of that priority with the Toronto office staff of the time was to fire the best people, hire the worst and chase away about nine struggling fledgling francophone congregations who, with careful support and nurture, might have made a significant impact for the gospel in Quebec. However, it was not to be!

Yes, mistakes were made, but they do not have to be repeated! I encourage the workers on the aboriginal scene to stand firm and build on what is in place and working. Insist that money be put there and make it count for the gospel. Then "you shall go out with joy... the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you... and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree..."

*Rev. J. Ross H. Davidson*

*Thetford Mines, Quebec*

## Thoughts on disobedient ministers

*Re. Rev. Ron Benty's letter Recognizing Sin As Sin, July/August*

I have always looked to my church as a place of refuge from the judgmental world that we confront each and every day. A place where everyone who wishes to deepen their spiritual health and Christian understanding is welcome. Benty's letter presents a dark side of organized religion — the side that hinders self-righteous individuals who are quick to judge and unwilling to engage in a process that may very well prove enriching for all individuals regardless of where you stand on the issue of same sex-marriage.

I had the privilege of being the lay representative on the task force from the Presbytery of East Toronto that recommended an overture be presented to the General Assembly. Benty described the overture as "an attempt by disobedient ministers and elders." His description could not be further from the truth. The overture was made with respect for the church's current definition of marriage as well as respect for those in our congregations who feel silenced and would like the matter to be reviewed in a safe and supportive environment.

Benty cannot be denied his desire to protect the church as he now experiences it but I continue to hope that the church will grow and thrive by opening doors to discuss issues that challenge us all in a safe and supportive manner rather than locking those doors in fear.

*Leslie Bruce-McCallum*

*Toronto*

As a Presbyterian elder, I long ago wrote off the Presbyterian Church in Canada as irrelevant. Since moving from my congregation, which over 15 years ago declared support for the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy, I have not kept up-to-date on the PCC's struggles with the issues confronting our society.

I recently happened across the letter from Ron Benty. In it, he characterized the overture to General Assembly seeking a response to Canada's same-sex legislation as "an attempt by disobedient ministers and elders to open the door for carte blanche acceptance of all forms of homosexual practice." He further accused the authors of engaging in

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"utter rebellion against Holy Scripture."

I still marvel at the church's obsession with select parts of the Holiness Code in Leviticus that are the basis for its position on practicing gays and lesbians, while ignoring other prohibitions in this code, such as marrying cousins or shaving beards that are similarly irrelevant to our society. I have always chuckled at the preoccupation of PCC's clergy on where and how its members (gay or straight) practice sex.

After almost two decades, I can only conclude that the PCC has regressed in dealing with this social issue. No wonder its membership continues to decline.

Notwithstanding the above, I applaud Benty and others for beating a dead horse on the same-sex issue and furthering the cause of relegating The Presbyterian Church in Canada to its well-earned position of irrelevance in our society.

Till I check in in another 20 years!

David Campbell  
Ottawa

### The myth-metaphor gospel

In response to D. Sutherland's letter in the *Record*: he espouses the thesis of Tom Harpur, author of *The Pagan Christ*, that Christianity is based primarily on myth, up to and including the Christ. Further, that Jesus is a metaphor for what might be God's grace. Also, that within this thesis, the future of Christianity is assured.

As I read of, listen to, and discuss with people who espouse this myth-metaphor gospel, I sense that they, in their searching, are creating and becoming

another myth. They are becoming a metaphor for apostasy.

God bless us everyone!

Al Dyson  
Grimsby, Ont.

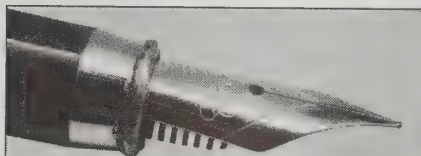
J. Gordon Neal (July/August) says some believe too much some not enough. I say I would rather be accused of believing too much, than too little on judgment day.

Lynda Fitch  
Wroxter, Ont

### Corrections

The Canadian Bible Society's Bike for Bibles ride begins July 2, 2006, not 2005, as the *Record* reported in its last issue. We apologize for the mistake.

The *Record's* June Presbytery Profile on Superior noted that some of the women in the photo were of Korean and Chinese descent. Their correct nationalities are Karen and Chin — two ethnic groups within Burmese culture.



The *Presbyterian Record* welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

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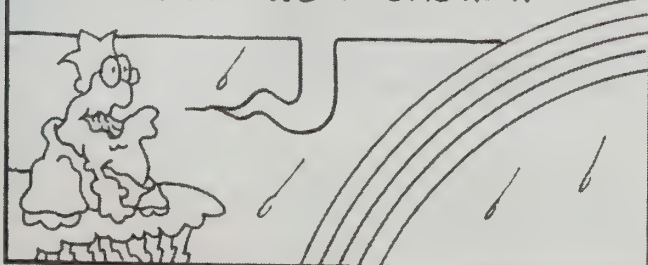
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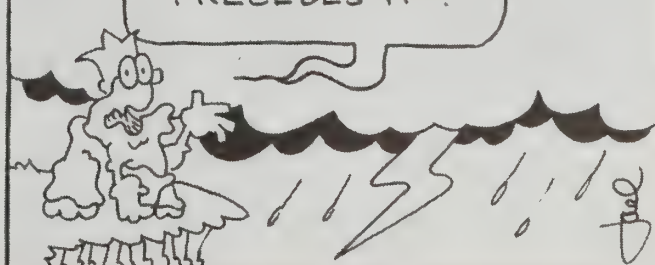
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WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF WE  
CREATURES MODELED OUR RACE  
RELATIONS ON THE RAINBOW  
THAT FOLLOWS A SHOWER--



INSTEAD OF THE  
LIGHTNING AND  
THUNDER THAT  
PRECEDES IT?





# people & places

They call themselves a small congregation, but they must be doing something right: here are seven new members at West St. Andrew's, St. Catharines, Ont. Joining the family are: Kevin Miller, Jen Miller, Larry Oates, Kai T. Bucht, Rev. Barb McGale, Shirley Bowden, Bryan Boles and Marie Glen.



St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont., considers all members of their congregation as Ministers. They certainly put that into action with a "Service with a Smile" when the youth did the sermon with puppets. The ministers are, Rick Lock, Rebecca Dismet, Jessica Burger, Alyisa Joanis, Meaghan Lock, Fred Nettle, and seated, Nathan Hunt, Rachel Lock and Candice Iftody.

**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.



For more People & Places submissions  
please visit our website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)

They were once youth members at St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont. Last October, they celebrated 50 years with the church. And they look like they could go another fifty. From left, Florence Ellis, Ann Torrie, Ann McCrindle and Lex McCrindle. Missing from the photograph is Nancy England. It is nice to have them in the Record, for the record.



There was a contest in the Presbytery of London to choose a Young Adult Representative for General Assembly. Bryan Thiel of New St. James won. Rev. Donald McInnis and Mike Ruggi, the teen class teacher, present him with a Bible to take to Edmonton.

Cake of the month: Irene McAllister, shown with her sister Marjorie Croft, celebrates her 100th birthday at a reception at Knox, Cannington, Ont., hosted by the Knox women. The sisters are both long-time members and continue to contribute to the life of the church.



Rev. Dr. Linda J. Bell has been ordained for 30 years, serving the last decade at Gale, Elmira, Ont. These are significant anniversaries, particularly the former: It is hard to believe, and many have forgotten, that the controversy over women in the pulpit was still fresh when she took her ordination vows. She is one of a small company of women who forged the future for the church by serving Christ. That service continues — seen by her side is her husband Martin Bauer as elder Doug Dann makes a presentation on behalf of the congregation.

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## Tsunami-swept areas still being rebuilt

*Aid often meets roadblocks along the way*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

It has been nine months since massive waves devastated South East Asia in December; wiping out homes, businesses, schools, individuals, families and entire villages. Countless media stories have followed the millions in donations being made. Still, even with checks and balances and a renewed commitment to ensuring funds get to where they're supposed to go, difficulties persist. Corrupt government officials, military control, armed rebel groups and humanitarian violations all challenge aid distribution.

KAIROS, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, reports that aid distribution in Aceh, Indonesia, is particularly difficult because of the civil war. One of the hardest-hit areas, with 160,000 dead and 600,000 left homeless, getting aid to locals is greatly needed. The area is under strict military control, and aid is used as a means of further controlling and dividing the population, said Connie Sorio, coordinator of Asia Pacific Partnerships at KAIROS. She said human rights violations, such as torture, sexual assault and random arrests are becoming more common.

Recent claims that millions of aid dollars meant for relief in Aceh are missing due to corruption, inefficient bureaucracies and political fighting, has spurred the World Bank to develop plans to make it easier for businesses to provide funding for emergency efforts and determine how their dollars can be maximized with tips for dealing with governments and aid agencies.

Similar problems exist in Sri Lanka where the Tamil Tigers, a rebel group, controls the northern and eastern parts of the country, and the government the rest. Squabbles over aid distribution have the two sides close to ending their ceasefire. The Tamil regions received about 58 per cent of the damage in Sri Lanka, but a \$3 billion US aid sharing deal was recently blocked. And, Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapakse, was accused of misappropriating tsunami aid but police found no evidence of wrong-doing.

According to Rick Fee, director of Presbyterian World Service & Development, many aid distribution problems can be alleviated by using local groups and AGO's instead of pursuing the bureaucracy and red tape of official government agencies. Even well-intentioned actions, such as the Indian government's distribution of 100,000 rupees (about \$2,800 Cdn) to the next-of-kin of persons killed by the tsunami, often have problems. In this case, the money is often deposited into a bank account and some women don't know how to access them. Furthermore, while the Indian government is doing well to re-build the infrastructure in

larger areas, Human Rights Watch reports that smaller, ravaged islands have been overlooked.

"Because NGOs have been active from before the tsunami, they're in a good position to help local groups mobilize," said Fee. "In the past, they have been strong lobbyists to try to get government services to people, such as electricity and roads. Therefore, NGOs are an advocate for people who might have fallen through the social cracks."

Despite difficulties, Presbyterians are doing their share to help tsunami victims. They contributed more than \$1.3 million to the church's tsunami appeal, with an additional \$747,956 in matching funds from the Canadian government. PWS&D is part of the fourth largest tsunami aid project approved by the federal government in its matching funds program. The \$6 million project in India, and a \$3 million initiative in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Thailand is a joint venture. Fee said he signed the cheque at the end of July, and \$1.5 million is on its way.

Because many of the victims were marginalized even before the disaster, improving their conditions and livelihood are a top priority. "We're committed to giving them a place to stand, and a place to grow," said Fee. "We're addressing fundamental human rights issues, and trying to assist people to move forward in their own lives, and if such a disaster were to happen again, they wouldn't be as adversely affected by it."

Sorio said it's important to note that Presbyterians, whether by distributing aid through PWS&D or supporting KAIROS are significantly involved in the relief effort.







St. Andrew's, Ottawa, proudly displayed their support of the Make Poverty History campaign by hoisting a 20-foot white banner. Located in the heart of downtown Ottawa, just minutes from the Parliament buildings, the church was the perfect place for Presbyterians to tell the federal government they want more foreign aid for impoverished countries. Members of the congregation are pictured at the unveiling in June.

## G8 does not Make Poverty History

The global Make Poverty History campaign had great hope that the July summit of eight leading industrial nations would take a major leap towards alleviating the debt of poorer countries. "The Group of Eight started well with cancelling US\$40 billion worth of debt," Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote in an editorial prior to the summit. "Now let them continue in that direction and change the trade laws."

The summit, however, proved to be a disappointment for many. "This is not the historic breakthrough the global campaign was looking for. This was a chance to set Africa on an irreversible path of growth and development. Instead the G8 have agreed to come up with an additional US\$20 billion but in five years time. There are still too many countries saddled with unpayable debts," says Mulima Kufekisa, head of Zambia's Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

"We were promised a new deal on trade between rich and poor countries but it's business as usual," said Charles Abugre, Christian Aid's head of policy, afterwards. "The G8 will continue to extract maximum concessions out of poor countries at the World Trade Organization."

The G8 countries are: Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States. — ENI

## Kenora Fellowship Centre update

The funding for the Kenora Fellowship Centre has not been cut, but has merely run the course of its contract according to Alex Faulds of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The July/August issue of the *Record* reported that the centre is facing a funding crisis, after the approximately \$125,000 yearly federal government grant was lost.

Kenora recently secured a new one-time \$25,000 grant from HRSDC under the government's homelessness initiative. The money will help keep the winter shelter running for another year. HRSDC previously provided funding through its job creation partnership program. The three-year contract, which is used to help fund new initiatives rather than provide core funding, ran out in April. Faulds said the \$25,000 grant acknowledges the good work the centre is doing.

Bob Wyber, Kenora's board chairman, is grateful for the funding extension. "They have extended themselves very generously beyond their traditional mandate," he said. "We're very fortunate."

Henry Hildebrandt, director of the centre, said the new funding will enable them to operate the winter shelter this year, but long-term funding is still needed. They are currently working on another proposal to secure such funding. "We're always squeaking by," he said. "Even if we were to only carry on with our regular programs [not including the winter shelter] we'd have a shortfall." — AM



## Church builds boats for Sri Lanka

ONE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION is taking it upon itself to help the fishing community in Sri Lanka. Bridlewood, Toronto, has launched the Sri Lanka Tsunami Fishing Boat Project in hopes of raising enough money to provide fishermen with new boats and nets, or repair old boats when possible. One well-equipped new boat costs about \$5,000 Cdn.

"The concern is partly for people over there," said Jack Charleson, the project's coordinator, "but it's also to show the Sri Lankan community here that we care."

In Sri Lanka, government efforts to help fishermen has focused on those who had licenses to own a boat and fish certain areas. Small-scale fishermen, who borrow boats and equipment from others in order to feed their families, have been virtually left out of the government's aid efforts.

The tsunami destroyed or damaged about 100,000 fishing boats throughout South East Asia. Because a significant portion of Bridlewood's congregation is from Sri Lanka or has family there, the congregation devised the fishing boat initiative.

Charleson is clerk of session and a Bridlewood member of 34 years. He spearheaded the project. "I'm from a seafaring family and I thought about all the people who had lost their livelihood, and how that has impacted individuals, families and villages," said Charleson. He presented his idea to session, and they have been working on the project since February.

Bridlewood challenges individuals, congregations and businesses to support the fishing boat project. Donations over \$10 are tax deductible, and the funds will be administered by Samaritan's Purse, whose Sri Lankan director has a daughter who attends Bridlewood. Toronto's Sri Lankan community is already starting showing interest. — AM



Back row left to right: Pauline Lindsay, Rev. Sarah Kim, Margaret Befus, Noelle Thomson, Druse Bryan, Sheila Paterson, Eunice Bisset, our driver from KCCJ. Front row left to right: Margaret McGillivray, Dineke Kraay, Beth McIntosh, Betty Siversns.

## WMS visits Koreans in Japan

BY MARGARET MCGILLIVRAY

For the first time members of the Women's Missionary Society were invited to the annual meeting of the National Christian Women's Association of the Korean Christian Church in Japan in June.

Members of the Women's Missionary Society visited Japan in June as part of an exchange and exposure program with the Korean Christian Church in Japan's National Christian Women's Association. The Korean women had visited Canada last fall. This is the first time the two organizations had held such an exchange. We visited with five Presbyterians while touring the cities of Kawasaki, Nagoya, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Kokura.

The trip coincided with the NCWA's 55th annual meeting, held at Lake Biwa. Welcomed by General Secretary Rev. Jung Soon Suh, and resident Shinyeong Kim, we were joined by 85 women from across Japan. Over three days we had worship and saw four-century-old Korean shrines. We visited the hot springs and geysers near Mount Fuji and in the evening we shared food and fellowship and had tremendous fun watching a traditional Korean dance with beautiful costumes.

A visit to a Kawasaki kindergarten, opened in 1973 by Mavis Hyndman, was a highlight. The cost of this school was financed by the WMS and Sunday schools across Canada. The children were delightful and very pleased to meet us. Rev. Dr. Han Lee, the chair of the Board of the Kawasaki Cultural Centre showed us a Day Care Senior's Centre and a large drop-in facility for 600 latchkey children. The KCCJ, said Lee, operates these centres with some government assistance.

We toured the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima, the Noritake Factory, the memorial to Jack McIntosh, the Daisho-In Buddhist Temple and saw Odawara, Nagoya and Osaka Castles. In Osaka, we toured the seniors' home Setton (which is Korean for 'rainbow') House, a dream that began in 1958 by the NCWA women and was realized with the opening in 1996. A large donation for this centre came from the WMS in Canada.

While we have all taken so much away with us from that trip, we did leave something behind. At the first Sunday church service we attended — in Nagoya — Eunice Bisset played the piano and we all sang 'Who's Going to Tell the Story.' After that, each Presbyterian that we visited asked us to sing for them and now the NCWA women have the music and words for this song.

Margaret McGillivray is president of the Women's Missionary Society.

# Montreal reconfigures

*Presbytery tries to cope with dwindling congregations by selling assets to fund new ministries*

The Presbytery of Montreal has approved the sale of two properties and the amalgamation of several congregations in order to improve the financial health of its churches and expand membership. The changes stem from recommendations of a strategic planning committee who released its report last summer.

As suggested in the 94-page report convened by Rev. Clyde Ervine, Ephraim Scott Memorial and Chambit Presbyterian will share quarters. Chambit has been directed to sell its current, cramped building in Point St. Charles and use half of the proceeds to buy the Ephraim Scott property in the West-End Snowdon district. The remainder of funds from Chambit's sale is to be used for purchasing a manse. The congregations of Chambit and Ephraim Scott will share access to the building for worship and meetings.

First Church in Verdun, which sold its building for \$650,000 last year (the congregation currently rents space in a United church), will donate \$450,000 to a newly formed Congregational Renewal Fund that will help struggling churches to develop their ministries and repair buildings. The fund will also help Ile Perrot and Westminster churches guarantee the stipend of full-time ministers.

As reported in the Oct. 2004 *Record*, the Presbyterian congregations on Montreal Island have dwindled alarmingly over the past four decades. With membership getting ever smaller and the value of church property increasing ever higher, the four-member strategic planning committee was formed in 2003 to look at how the church should respond.

Over the past year, the presbytery has examined the recommendations at their regular meetings and approved or tweaked several of the motions. It was recommended, for example, that the congregations of Hungarian and Livingstone churches be amalgamated on Sunday, Oct. 9, 2005. However, at the June 21 meeting of the presbytery, the motion was amended to state that the churches will instead "establish a programming committee made up of elders from both congregations who can communicate with each other to coordinate activities." Hungarian and Livingstone are now a two-point pastoral charge.

Over the past 40 years, the West End-N.D.G. membership of Knox Crescent Kensington and First Presbyterian has dropped from 1,400 to 200. The strategic planning report indicated the church was "in crisis" and with assets of \$1.5 million, suggested that the congregation take two years to move toward some "significant changes."

Last November, the presbytery strongly encouraged KCKF to change its name. "We believe this is the time for a new beginning at Knox Crescent Kensington and First, in which the weight of the past is not so prominent. Since we want to signal newness in the congregation's ministry," reads the motion adopted by the presbytery, "we believe this should be symbolized in a new congregational name." The presbytery has also committed to visiting KCKF no later than Sept. 2006 in order to assess the health of the congregation.

Similarly, the presbytery approved a name change for St-Luc and Maisonneuve St. Cuthberts congregations to Église Presbyterienne de Maisonneuve (Maisonneuve Presbyterian Church) to reflect the increased ministry in both French and English.

Much of the June 21 meeting focused on efforts to develop francophone congregations. A new standing committee was formed for this purpose (drawing funds from the Congregational Renewal Fund) and a motion was passed that will ensure every congregation in the presbytery incorporate the bilingual reality of Montreal into public worship. The presbytery will also establish a halftime mission appointment to serve in francophone mission. — Amy Cameron



## Elders' conference has youthful flair

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE for Elders and Lay Leaders in Edmonton was such a tremendous success that General Assembly unanimously approved a mandate to continue the pre-Assembly training sessions over the next five years. There was a record attendance of more than 150 people at the June 4th event at Dayspring, Edmonton.

"For the first time ever at a Presbyterian conference, we almost ran out of food," says Roberta Clare, director of the Elders' Institute at St. Andrew's College in Vancouver, B.C.

With a co-sponsorship from the Life and Mission Agency of the PCC, the Institute designed workshops that focused on topics such as 'Caring for our Elderly' and 'The Role of the Elder in Korean churches'.

A major goal for the Institute, however, remains: revitalizing the youth in the Presbyterian church. With this in mind, Clare is developing a new program to reach youth in remote areas of the country. Together with the Synod of British Columbia, Clare hopes to offer spiritual support for kids who "don't feel like they're involved in the church at the moment."

The program will begin with a six-week online course in the fall called 'The Wisdom of the Elders and the Energy of Youth: a Course in Spiritual Mentoring'. Made possible by a grant from the national Women's Missionary Society, this course will train elders and lay leaders to discuss issues of faith with youth online.

"At the Elders' Institute, that is our primary goal — revitalizing the youth. However, it always seems to be at the cost of the older people," says Clare. "But I think this will revitalize everybody. I don't think we need to be apologizing that we're an older church." — AC



## Divestment not anti-Semitic, says WCC

WHILE ANTI-SEMITISM is a sin, not every critique of Israeli policies qualifies as anti-Semitism, Rev. Samuel Kobia told a Jewish-Christian gathering in July.

At the International Council of Christians and Jews in Chicago, the World Council of Churches' general secretary addressed the issue of churches divesting from companies who profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

Kobia had previously supported this initiative. Critics said the announcement was "an act of anti-Semitism directed against all Jews."

Kobia said anti-Semitism is "absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith," and acknowledged that the divestment issue has been disturbing to many Jews. However, he said "there is a risk and perhaps a temptation to fall into readily available metaphors," such as comparing divestment to the boycott of Jewish goods and persons in Germany in the 1930s.

Kobia said there is a need to listen to each other and to discuss future directions. He called for a "commitment among people of faith" to ensure religious traditions are not "used to breed contempt and death." — WCC

## Israeli policies criticized

*WCC joins local Palestinian Christians in call to use investments to pressure Jewish state*

Both the World Council of Churches and Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center made statements earlier this year that are critical of Israel, calling for an end to humanitarian violations while the status of Jerusalem is debated.

The WCC supports a call by the Presbyterian Church (USA) to divest in companies in Israel contributing to humanitarian violations, and it said the final status of Jerusalem must be part of a comprehensive peace settlement and be negotiated without delay. It went on to state that alterations of boundaries, population and settlements that change the religious, cultural or historical character of Jerusalem without consent are violations of international law.

The council contends that while world attention is focused on Israel's plans to withdraw from Gaza, the government "has intensified unilateral programs to consolidate control over Jerusalem and other occupied territory." These include:

- Creating a border by constructing the Wall on occupied territory, in contravention of international law
- Cutting the West Bank in two by adding 3,500 housing units to Maale Adu-mim settlement, mocking prospects for a viable Palestinian State with a shared Jerusalem as its capital
- Repeated declarations by the government that large illegal West Bank settlements and all of Jerusalem will belong to Israel in any final agreement
- Ongoing violations of human and civil rights of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Jewish settlements are built in their neighbourhoods while construction permits for Palestinians are denied, family homes are demolished and requests for family reunification are denied
- Threats of an absentee property law allowing confiscation of Palestinian property in Jerusalem and a new regulation to require permits for Jerusalem residents entering the West Bank

The WCC calls for "an open and inclusive Jerusalem, a city of shared sovereignty and citizenship, a city of two peoples and three faiths, of Christians, Mus-

lims and Jews. Now is the time to cease actions that pre-empt peace in Jerusalem and to begin negotiation of Jerusalem's final status within the framework of international law."

A Christian organization, Sabeel also addressed human rights' concerns, paying particular attention to morally responsible investment. The center objects "to all those who carry out violent, unethical, immoral, and illegal actions," saying Christians have a God-given responsibility to act. "Morally responsible investment is a means of enacting our obligation to prevent any assistance or participation in the violations of basic human rights. All those who believe in a just resolution to the conflict also have an ethical duty to prevent unlawful harm to civilians."


International law, like that set out in

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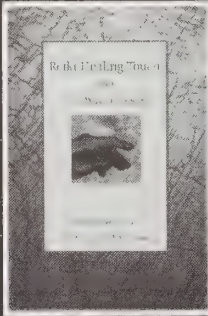


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the Fourth Geneva Convention (to which Israel is a signatory), specifies that people living under occupation must be protected until the occupation comes to an end. Because of this, stated the Sabeel letter, it is illegal to build on or confiscate their land, kill or harm innocent civilians (whether Palestinian or Israeli), to employ collective punishment and to transfer parts of an occupying powers' civilian population into occupied territories.

"We are calling for divestment from targeted companies that benefit from the violation of human rights and refuse to alter their behaviour once confronted. This pressure must continue until the occupation ends."

As responsible owners and investors, the churches have multiple economic options, including:

- Avoidance – avoiding investment in companies on moral grounds
- Involvement – exercising influence and pressure on companies and corporations in shareholder meetings to actively promote moral and social responsibility and accountability
- Alternative or selective investment – establishing alternative investment funds that promote justice and peace
- Withdrawal – pulling investments on moral grounds
- Reinvestment – moving the money from investments in corporations complicit of wrongdoing to organizations that engage in morally responsible business, or to reinvest in the organization after positive change occurs

Sabeel calls on churches to exert pressure on companies to divest from businesses that provide products, services, technology or finances that sustain, support or maintain the occupation, assist in the building of the Wall, or harm civilians. "Churches, by moving from statements to direct action and adopting appropriate financial policies that are in line with their moral and theological stance, create an example for the international community." – *AM with files from WCC and Sabeel*

## Economic Leverage

THE US UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST has joined the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the World Council of Churches in adopting a resolution to use "economic leverage" to promote peace between Israel and Palestine.

A second resolution passed by the UCC calls upon Israel to pull down the barrier in the West Bank. The synod declared that the security fence is "visually, physically, psychologically and spiritually offensive."

Jewish organizations have criticized such policies. Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews said, "To single out Israel as a human rights abuser while turning a blind eye to actual abuse in tyrannical regimes around the world is not only delusional but smacks of an anti-Jewish attitude." – *with files from ENI*

## Israel invites Pope

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER Ariel Sharon has invited Pope Benedict XVI to visit the Holy Land, in another sign of warming ties between the Jewish state and the Holy See.

Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict's predecessor, visited a synagogue in Rome in 1986 and later apologized for centuries of Christian persecution against the Jews during his landmark visit to the Holy Land in 2000.

"We believe that Pope Benedict will continue the path forged by John Paul II in strengthening these ties," said an Israeli spokeswoman. – *Michele Green, ENI*

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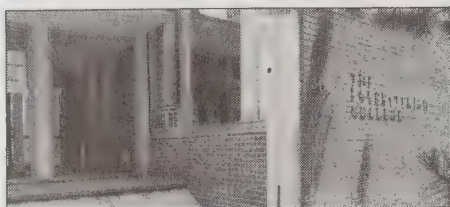
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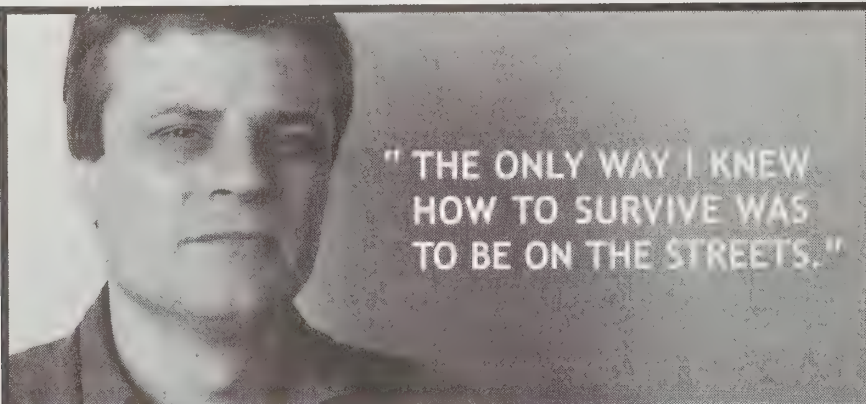


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## news

### Megachurch or multiplex?

AN ENORMOUS CHURCH CENTRE that will serve at least 15 churches is under construction in an Amsterdam suburb. The Candlestick Project, which broke ground in Bijlmer on July 6, will have five worship areas in its building catering to the needs of different and diverse faiths such as Greek Orthodox, Ghanian and Iranian. The centre will also house a nursery, apartments, offices and a café. It is due to be completed in 2007.

With more than 90 immigrant churches operating in the Bijlmer suburb of Amsterdam, many services are currently makeshift, taking place in parking lots and apartment buildings. — ENI

### Gospel gets real

VISIONTV IS JUMPING onto the reality TV bandwagon with its new production, Gospel Challenge. Described as a lifestyle/documentary series, the show will give aspiring Canadian gospel singers a chance at their big break.

Created in cooperation with Riddle Films, Gospel Challenge will follow three professional choir leaders from Toronto, Montreal and Halifax as they each attempt to put together a 16-member amateur choir and prepare them for a concert in Toronto — all within one week.

Auditions were held over the summer. The show is slated for broadcast sometime in 2006, and is part of VisionTV's new lineup of faith-based lifestyle programs. VisionTV is a Canadian multi-faith and multicultural television station.

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Standing left: Linda Shaw, Cecelia Morales, Julie Powers, Valerie Walker and Nina Dupuis.  
Sitting left: Sonja Stewart, Chris Lindsay and Sheri Coutts.

## Children's worship program celebrated

The Children and Worship program is celebrating 20 years of offering renewed ideas for Sunday school. Based on Montessori principles, young children are taught about God and the Bible using interactive, visual and creative methods, in an effort to help them experience the stories as well as learn about them.

The Canadian program is coordinated by Linda Shaw, a long-time Presbyterian missionary. She said the program focuses on what God calls all Christians to do: worship. "Children as young as three can worship God," she said. "And this provides a safe place where children can be calm, quiet and reflective, and listen to God."

Shaw said her home congregation of Westwood, Winnipeg, has had the program since she introduced it 15 years ago, and new families have started coming because of it. Shaw has adapted it for use in a mid-week Bible study with developmentally disabled adults, most of whom live in group homes. The program also operates in some hospitals.

"I've been around this church for many years and have worked on many different projects and this is my all-time favourite," said Dorothy Henderson, the church's associate secretary for Christian Education. "It's a beautifully enriching program for the child, and the leaders love it too."

Lessons are designed to be tactile experiences, the stories told with physical figures. The children are often asked to create something in response to what they learned. "It's focused on helping each child develop inner-strengths as they grow in their faith," said Henderson.

Congregational leaders of the program are trained by a network of qualified people throughout North America. Basic training involves a two day course which is offered across the country. Visit [www.presbycan.ca/childyouth/worship](http://www.presbycan.ca/childyouth/worship) for more information. — AM

[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)

## Fatwa against terrorism

US ISLAMIC LEADERS issued a fatwa — an Islamic religious ruling — against violence and acts of political extremism in July.

The ruling was endorsed by more than 120 Muslim organizations and leaders and was issued by the 18-member Fiqh Council of North America, an Islamic jurisprudence body.

"Islam strictly condemns religious extremism and the use of violence against innocent lives," the council said.

The council said it was "following the guidance of our scripture, the Quran, and the teachings of our Prophet Muhammad." — Chris Herlinger, ENI

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# youth voice

THE PASSION OF TEENS AND  
TWENTIES REMINDS US WHY THE  
CHURCH IS IMPORTANT

**FIRST THE NUMBERS:** in 1984 there were 896 Sunday schools in the Presbyterian church with 44,891 students. A decade later there were 850 schools serving 33,238 students. And in 2003: 811 schools, 25,656 students. This is not merely attrition — the mainline churches' usual excuse. This is a profoundly disturbing collapse of, arguably, the most important mission assigned to the church.

With numbers declining at both ends, we can easily see the future.

Or can we?

Each person who contributed to this special section of youth voices was given the same instruction: speak in your own voice and tell the church what you want it to hear. And they did: they speak with a passion that only young people have, and others must emulate.

Numbers don't tell the whole story. Passion does. Passion for Christ, passion for the church, passion for justice and passion for our faith. These are just a few voices, we hope to hear more in the future to instruct us, to guide us and to remind us who we are and why we continue to worship.

# THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

*Negative definitions lead to negative attitudes*

<BY ERIN WOODS>

**T**here are generally three age groups of people: adults, children and teenagers. As a member of the third, I thought writing an article about my own generation would be easy. Predictably, I was wrong.

I wrote three complete drafts and began many more, which I rejected before they were finished. Nothing seemed to work. For the first time I understood the difficulty that parents have in understanding teenagers. We're confusing. Trying to sort things out, I consulted a dictionary. Adolescent is defined as "A person who is no longer a child but is not yet an adult." Well, I thought. That's useful. (Note: sarcasm.) If even a dictionary can only define us by the things we aren't, what hope have we of knowing what we are?

Curious, I looked up Adult: "A person who is fully mature, who has passed adolescence." Interesting. Child: "A boy or girl at any age between infancy and adolescence."

I sat back and considered this. According to the dictionary, a child is someone who is not yet a teenager, a teenager is someone who is neither child nor adult, and an adult is someone who is no longer a teenager. That could be where some of the problem lies. We can only define ourselves by what we aren't, in relation to the other age categories. That is a simple explanation, but unsatisfactory. It still gives us no identity.

Teens seek identity. That is possibly the one thing that does distinguish us reliably. The thing that defines us collectively is our passion for individuality. Ironical, isn't it? But so true. One reason adults fear teens is our confusing diversity and our refusal to accept normality. It's one of the ways cliques are born; subgroups of people who are bent on defying the large group of people that adults try desperately to condense into a single entity that they can qualify as Teenager. This group, while admirable for its *joie de vivre*, is, to them, irresponsible and reckless. Someday, however, its members will manage to miraculously grow up and turn out all right. They aren't sure exactly how this will happen but they have faith that God will make it so.

God. That's another thing. Teens do not go to church. If you think about it, are you surprised? Youth want to live in the Now and most churches are still clinging to the past. They may have youth groups but many of them have no way of contributing to the church community, which means they feel as though they have no purpose. We need to feel we have a purpose. If the church is afraid that any help from us within the service will invite that much-feared demon called Change, they may be right. A new generation always does things differently than the last ones. But we don't want to take over. We only want to help. It may be hard at first to put trust in us energetic young people,

but believe me, if we have a job to do, we will come on Sunday to do it. Can the change of having youth come to church possibly be a bad one?

When I was working on this article, I passed a sheet of paper around my English class with the heading: Differences and similarities between teens and adults. When I got it back I was mildly surprised that the similarities column was as full as the differences, and that the differences seemed to praise adults more. Apparently we realize the truth about ourselves, and are willing to admit it. We are less responsible. But, as my classmates said, we are all people, all experiencing life and trying to enjoy it, and always striving to be better than we are.

---

Erin Woods is a member of Calvin, North Bay, Ont.





## FACING THE FRIGHTENING

*The Generation Next conference goes boldly into the future*

<BY REBEKAH MITCHELL>

Two altars of unhewn stone, a three-wick pillar candle surrounded by hundreds of tea lights, rocking guitars and a sanctuary full of church leaders worshipping God with abandon. These are my memories of the *Generation Next* conference held by Trinity Community, Oro, Ont., in June.

The conference focused on encouraging and challenging church leaders to make changes in order to minister to the next generation. The statistics show that much of what we do at church — the music we use, the traditional sermon without any visual aid, the use of archaic language — does not connect with “unchurched” people. *Generation Next*, with its music that sounds like Top 40 radio, bold use of visuals and accessible language, is calling for change.

And the call was exciting. Stephanie Wood, an 18-year-old co-youth pastor at Gilmour Memorial Baptist Church couldn’t stop uttering one word as I spoke with her about the conference: “Wow.” She went on to say, “the music is awesome. I’m amazed that this conference could be relevant to people 65 and over, [while still being] relevant to me.”

It is a call to reach out to a generation that is alienated from God.

It’s a call that will require sacrifice — remember those two altars of unhewn stone? They were placed on opposite sides of the platform at the front of the sanctuary. At the beginning of the conference, Carey Nieuwhof, lead pastor at Trinity, explained that one was the altar of sacrifice and the other was the altar of thanksgiving. Trinity as a church has been able to spend considerable time at the altar of thanksgiving as they watch their congregation grow. But they first had to spend considerable time at the altar of sacrifice — giving up the but-we’ve-always-done-it-that-way mindset, giving up traditional church music, giving up three church buildings and a wealth of

**Change is necessary, change is possible. Change is frightening — but it does not have to be done alone**

history in order to amalgamate into a new congregation and build a new place to worship. Conference attendees were encouraged to write down what they are willing to sacrifice and place it on the altar during the weekend.

During one of his sessions, Reggie Joiner, the executive director of Family Ministry at North Point Community, Alpharetta, Ga., provided a pivotal defi-



Conference speakers and leaders Chuck Congram, Reggie Joiner and Carey Nieuwhof.

nition of relevance: using what is cultural to communicate what is timeless. The church has the timeless word of God in scripture. It is pure folly to ignore the opportunity to make God accessible to the next generation by using culture.

Amanda Richards, a 25 year-old member of Knox, Agincourt,

Ont., reflected that as a new Christian she thought she had to learn about how things are done in the church. But

after attending *Generation Next*, she changed her mind. “Well, maybe I don’t need to learn church culture,” she stated. “Maybe I’m to teach people about culture outside of the church.”

Change is necessary, change is possible. Change is frightening — but it does not have to be done alone. One of the most impressive images used during the conference was that of a three-wick pillar candle (representing God, the three-in-one) surrounded by hundreds of little tealights (representing churches and believers gathered together in ministry). Nieuwhof used the image to close a panel session in which members of the *Generation Next* network spoke about the support they received from Trinity and each other as they attempt to implement changes in their own churches. Everyone on that panel said how crucial it was to know that they are not alone.

My heart aches for a world that needs God, but doesn’t know how to seek Him. I want to know how to help people discover faith in Jesus Christ. I want to do whatever it takes to communicate the timeless truth of a God who loves us and who is near to us. *Generation Next* called me back to that passion and helped me figure out that sacrifice doesn’t have to be a bad thing — it can lead to thanksgiving.

Rebekah Mitchell was a student minister at Knox, Agincourt this summer and developed a children’s program.



# FEELING GOD'S PLEASURE

*Everything we do is an act of worship*

<BY LAURA SMITH>

I remember the first time I met someone living with AIDS. I would find out later that I already knew many people living with AIDS, but this was the first person I met who actually admitted to having AIDS. And she was dying. It was awful.

I recently returned from living in Ekwendeni, Malawi, for 10 months. I am studying international development at the University of Toronto. As part of this program, I worked in northern Malawi, through The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I worked at a hospital, mainly with projects in the primary health care department that are supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development. I spent most of my time with an agriculture and nutrition project and two AIDS projects, but also saw much of the other work that went on at the hospital.

On this particular day, I had been in Malawi for about a month. I was visiting home-based care patients with the AIDS program coordinator so that I could become better oriented. Little did I know what I was getting myself into. This young woman — younger than me — was lying in the middle of the floor in her mud hut, her frail frame wheezing under a pile of blankets. She couldn't say anything but just lay there gasping as we visited. One of the volunteers who had come with us gave some aspirin and gloves to the woman's caregivers. We had a little prayer, and then we left. She died half an hour later.

I was shocked. I can't even describe for you what I was thinking and feeling. I returned to my house that evening and had to phone my parents in Canada because I was so distraught.

It's just not fair. On so many levels, it's just not fair. The more time I spent in Malawi, it didn't get any easier to deal with AIDS. It's not something you can get used to. The issue is

overwhelming and it often seems as if there is no hope... that we will never win.

I remember reading an article in *Maclean's* last year — one of those spotlights on 'up and coming' Canadians. One of the people being featured, because of his work with refugees, was James Milner. I had met James a few times and was interested to read about his work. The last paragraph of the article really struck me. As he commented on the influence his faith had had in helping him to choose his life's work, he said that this work was "a form of worship" for him. As with James, this work is a form of worship for me. There are so many different ways to worship, many of them not found in pews on Sunday morning. My work and my studies are ways for me to praise... to let God know that I am thankful for all he has given me and that I care about his world and his people.

Eric Liddel, the subject of *Chariots of Fire*, said, "When I run, I feel His pleasure." When I helped out at Prevention of Mother-to-Child clinics, I felt God's pleasure. When I sang songs with children at community-based orphan care centres, I felt God's pleasure. When I prayed with that dying woman, I felt God's pleasure. When I do my readings and write papers for my university courses, I struggle, but I feel God's pleasure. When I file reports at PWS&D, I feel God's pleasure.

When we live for God — however that manifests itself — we feel God's pleasure.

Laura Smith is at University of Toronto, is a Presbyterian church member and a big fan of chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream.

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*A survey of youth tells it like it is* <BY DOROTHY HENDERSON>

**T**his past year I completed a survey of 240 young adults who grew up in the church. The survey was a result of curiosity and concern. Since 1984, we have lost approximately 10,000 children from our Sunday schools each decade.

Is it just demographics? Or, do we need to be more self-critical and self-aware of how we “do” faith development and nurture our children? Is Sunday school a thing of the past? Why not ask young adults who have recently “graduated” from our Sunday schools and youth programs?

I interviewed them about their childhood memories of church. Here are their thoughts:

### **1. The young adults said, “Please ... do something about worship.”**

They didn’t much care for their worship experiences as children and, even though some of them express comfort in currently participating in the familiar patterns of worship, they long for variety and flexibility. In fact, they indicated that they “vote with their feet,” and simply go to other churches to have this need satisfied from time to time. In general, the young adults express impatience with our worship and long for something more experiential and participatory.

### **2. They said, “My family was the primary influence on my faith journey.”**

The fact that 98 per cent of the respondents said that family members were responsible for helping them attend church speaks volumes about the important role of family support.

### **3. They said, “We liked Sunday school ... but please improve it.”**

- Sunday school should not be the only or the main activity at church
- We want active learning
- Sunday school teachers/leaders need to be well trained.
- Continuity of teachers is important

### **4. They said, “There are many paths ... many roads to Christian faith.”**

The young adults provided a long list by which they entered into the Christian life. This reminds older adults that there is no one way to the life of faith. It would be easier if there were! The list of items tells us that children come to faith through camping, through singing, through relationships, through drama and dance, through making something creative with their hands.

### **5. They said, “We want to be ‘adopted children’ of the congregation.”**

If children and youth are to be an important part of the

congregation, they want to feel like an adopted child or grandchild. They want to be included in a meaningful way in just about every aspect of church life. They want to be known by name.

### **6. They said, “Don’t judge or squelch our spiritual questions.”**

The young adults made it very clear that they want to feel it is okay to continue asking probing and searching questions about their faith. The young people of today will probably never arrive in their spiritual quest. As one girl put it, “We are just marching along through life.”

### **7. They said, “Please ... be open and adaptable.”**

- Churches are afraid to try new things, even simple things like opening the doors of their buildings (female, age 24)
- The church’s resistance to change pushes young people away (female, age 19)
- The music in most churches is a good example of trying to hold on to the old ways and not adapting (male, age 26)
- I dislike the church’s reluctance to adapt... to not accept homosexuality, and other religions (male, age 21)

### **8. They said, “Please understand that we have not been raised in the same era as you older adults.”**

There is one thing that we simply must not do. We should not and cannot blame our youth for being a product of the culture that we helped to create. Older adults were raised in the time of modernism, but the young people in our churches are born into an era of post-modernity. Their worldview is different and we need to understand the differences in order to communicate well.

### **9. They said, “As children, relationships to adults, particularly the minister and minister’s spouse, were important.”**

In total, of all the important people to children, 82 per cent of them were adults. As children, 39 per cent of the respondents said that ministers and their spouse were important to their faith development. It is both rewarding and humbling for pastors to hear that 12 of the 14 young adults in the second set of interviews would turn to them if they had a troubling question of faith.

### **10. They said, “Please ... give us a chance to do meaningful service.”**

If there is one dramatic thing we learn from the young adults it is that they simply were not given enough meaningful ways to serve and make a difference in the world when they were children and teens.



**11. They said, "Please hold on to the church's core values ... even if we can't agree on what they are."**

- There should be some core values — kindness, respect, but each group can have a different slant. (male, age 20)
- People have different points of view, but there are some things that are basic — belief in Jesus as God and the Bible (female, age 20)
- Christians should have some concepts in common — like grace and truth, but in real life there is room to differ (female, age 24)

**12. They said, "Be stronger leaders."**

Some people in our congregations have to create the climate where children are included, respected and involved. These things do not magically happen.

**13. They said, "Communicate ... communicate ... communicate."**

Many young adults expressed a desire to have honest, open conversations with older adults. This may surprise some older adults who think that young adults have "better things to do" than to talk with them:

- It is important for ministers and church people to understand the world in which people live so they can speak to it. (male, age 24)
- The church has stayed in the medieval and dark ages and emphasized the old stories of the Bible; the church needs to find ways to express Christian truth in new ways like using *Star Wars*. (male, age 22)
- We need far better communication between denominations. (female, age 23)

**14. They said, "Believe it or not, church is part of my social life."**

Having Christian friends seems an important factor in helping young adults stay engaged with the church.

**15. They said, "We don't know our stories."**

One of the surprises in the survey was how little the young adults knew of their own family story and history. If they did not know their family story, had they also lost the biblical story?

**16. They said, "We want to be part of a 'reaching out' church."**

Congregations which are actively reaching out to new people have a profound effect on children and young adults. A group of young adults who have remained active in the church, described their congregation as very or quite active in reaching out to new people, and they were proud of this.

**17. They said, "Going to church is a habit ... a good habit."**

- Church has always been a part of my life, and I can't imagine it not being there (female, age 18)
- Church was always just a part of who I was and what I did; I never really questioned it or fought it (male, age 22)
- I think attending church has to do with my upbringing. I never once thought about not attending. It is at this time in my life that I'm very thankful (female, age 18)

This is a much-shortened version of the full survey. A full version with study questions will be published soon. If extra resources are needed for any of the topics in the survey, contact the Education in the Faith department at church offices.

Dorothy Henderson is Associate Secretary, Education in the Faith. General Assembly recommended that "each congregation be encouraged to take time in 2005-2006 to read and study the seventeen comments made by the young adults and explore implications for ministry with children, youth and young adults in the congregation."

## GOODY-GOODY SHARES HER FAITH

### *Non-Christian friends are cynical about church and church life*

<BY LAURA ASHFIELD>

I'm a double PK (Preacher's Kid — both of my parents are ministers) and so church has been my second home. I don't go to church because I have to, or because I feel obligated to. I go because I want to be there. Being part of a church gives me a sense of community. I don't know how it is for other ministers' kids; but my congregation has been very supportive of me and my sisters.

When friends find out that I am a Christian, they almost always ask me about my perspective on gay marriage or sex before marriage. That seems to be what they think Christians are concerned about these days. I am never asked about my person-

al faith or what it means to me, or why I believe. Then, when they find out my parents are ministers, there is a sense of pity in their voices. They ask me if my parents make me go to church or about all the rules they impose.

I have a lot of non-Christian friends and we have a lot of spiritual talks. Many of them say they don't like the idea of organized religion. They only go to church at Christmas and Easter, and never feel they belong. A lot of their understanding of the Christian faith is from media, from their parents and from their peers.

They remind me that a lot of horrible things have happened



I have been teased for being so positive and cheerful and even a goody-goody. And, I have been told that I can't be critical in my thinking because of my faith perspective

in the world in the name of religion and this is another reason for their cynicism. They see the Christian faith in terms of rules and being told what to think and what to do. I try and explain faith from my perspective and what my experience of the church has been. Generally, I find my friends to be open to these conversations, as long as I'm not trying to convert them.

I have been involved in AIDS fundraising and Adbusters (which critiques society and tries to change the media), as well as the Charity Council at University. All of these seem a natural extension of my Christian faith and what Jesus was all about. My school friends however, do not see the connection at all and that sometimes makes me sad, other times frustrated.

I have been teased for being so positive and cheerful and even a goody-goody. And, I have been told that I can't be critical in my thinking because of my faith perspective.

Some teens do take a very fanatic approach and try to convert their friends. Their spirituality seems somewhat extreme at times, and from my perspective, I don't see a lot of dialogue.

They talk, but don't listen. However, some of these youth really had a conversion experience; they used to be drug addicts and school bullies; then a friend took them to a Christian youth rally and they became Christians. Their theological perspective has a strong focus on personal salvation.

I feel very grounded in who I am as a person and the choices that I make day-to-day. I believe that this is because of my faith in Christ. I am grateful that so far there haven't been too many dilemmas in my life where I didn't know what I should do, or not do.

For me, church is a place where I belong. It is like the soil where I am rooted. It's a place for fun with friends and a place to grow closer to God and grow as a person. The church has provided me with community, encouraged me to take a stand and make a difference.

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Laura Ashfield is a second year BA student at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont.

## STRIKING A BALANCE WHEN LIFE IMPEDES

*Faith can survive school and religiosity*

<BY HARRIET YIGA >

Sunday morning. The birds are chirping. The sun is shining. And with muttered grumblings that you'll make up for it next week, you lie down and get back to dreaming. In our world today, what does it mean to be a Christian youth? It means having to find that delicate balance between young adulthood and your faith. Contemporary adolescents are seen as restless, disillusioned, rebellious and irreverent. Adults are quick to argue that we have too much time on our hands and don't spend enough of it in the church. If that's not the case, then teenagers are anxious to believe in anything, so long as it's radically different from the faith in which they were raised. But, let's just take a quick look at our daily influences: music, television, pop culture, high school, graduation, university, girlfriends, boyfriends, sports, volunteering, summer jobs, homework and always in the background, our parents.

Are these merely excuses we have created in order to ignore what we know to be our responsibility to the church? No. In fact, these are powerful, if not always important foundations that clamour for our time and attention. So where is my faith, how do I find the balance? For me, the answer, though not easy to articulate, encompasses everything. My faith is expressed in my upbringing, in the love and respect I hold for my parents, in the time I spend with my friends, in every act of horror and in every act of kindness.

Even those who seek to rebel cannot wipe out every trace of what it is they were raised to believe. It is a part of us, as is our race or culture. Our parents have already become our foundation and what they teach and ask us to understand, be it faith or morals, becomes a cornerstone in our life. With my girlfriends, it takes on a different persona. Friday after school usually consists of an exhilarating soccer match, against the much inferior boys of course, and is followed by a cooling-off period at the local fast food restaurant. Surrounded by those of the Islamic and Hindu faith, our weekly group outings can sometimes turn into debates of massive proportions. A simple query like "When do you think you'll get married?" spirals into a questioning of the purpose of marriage, our reason for existence. And that constant wonder as we friends from different faiths ask, "Which one of us will be saved?"

In this exploration of the issues that separate and divide us, it's amusing how I always emerge stronger in Christianity. In our daily world of random acts of terrorism or visions of devastating poverty, prayers become a constant, and with each prayer, a reaffirmation of our faith in God. Similarly, goodness, portrayed in every kind word, or in any selfless deed, can be attributed to a belief in the power of Christ and that which He tried to teach.

I was walking home from school one afternoon, past a Pentecostal church and ahead of me, I could hear a little girl singing

"Jesus loves me." First I smiled at the innocence of childhood, my memories of that tune, but then I felt sad. Unknowingly, she had reminded me how long it had been since I had thought about those three simple words, or of how effortless living used to be.

Lately, my thoughts had consisted of how much work I had, what I have to do to survive in order to graduate and how that would result in the birth of even more complications. Feeling religiously guilty, I went home and because I hadn't done it in a while, started flipping through the Bible. Stopping here and there, I didn't know what I was looking for until I landed at the Beatitudes. Eight short, concise, easy to understand lines, but how profound! Providing a map of life, this reading brought

forth a realization that the doors of religion were never actually closed, but instead, slightly open. I'm one of the grumbling, not always having enough time to go to church types, but I also know that that isn't all my faith wants of me. A personal relationship with the Father and His Son, an understanding that I will never stand alone, and a trust that the life I am living is what was meant for me... that is how my scales are balanced.

Harriet Yiga is starting her university education this month. She lives in Toronto.



## STOP WHISPERING, START SHOUTING

*Faith doesn't have a genre or a title, just your own curiosity*

<BY JAMES KENDALL>

When sorting through my music collection, I, like most, file according to genres. I keep my modern hip-hop funk separate from my Thelonious Monk, and my roots-rock separate from my Motown. I go through phases of being into different genres. Often I'll listen to nothing but folk for a couple of weeks and then dive into a weeklong changeover listening to nothing but my favourite band, Radiohead. One thing that I don't do though is separate my Christian music from my non-Christian music. This has never really made sense to me.

What is it that makes music Christian? Do all the band members have to be Christian and declare it loud and clear on their albums and at their concerts? Does there merely have to be a band member who believes in God? Some things are obviously Christian such as my second-favourite CD, the rock opera soundtrack, *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Some things are more debatable, such as my all-time favourite album *Kid A* by Radiohead.

We lose something when we try to divide our music collection, or worse, discriminate against certain artists because they're not Christian by our definition. There's a lot of great music out there that's very 21st century secular-pop-culture but which we can still enjoy, and even learn from, as Christians. One of my favourite Radiohead songs "Stop Whispering", although originally written as a tribute to the band The Pixies, is a perfect expression for Christians: "And the wise men say I don't wanna hear your voice.... Stop whispering, start shouting. Stop whispering, start shouting." How often do we hesitate to defend an ideal or friend at work or at school, because we do not want to feel out of place? It's difficult making our voices heard as Christians these days. Society has little tolerance for us taking time to think about what's right according to our faith.

At the Live 8 concert in Barrie, Ont., dozens of artists performed in support of increasing Canadian aid to Africa. The concert was free and 35,000 lucky ticket holders enjoyed an amazing experience. Most of the bands had little to say or sing



about God (although Neil Young wrote and performed a touching song for the event entitled "When God Made Me"). Finding the spiritual in such a secular event is easy though. After all, the motive for the whole international series of concerts was to help raise awareness of poverty in Africa.

I have little difficulty bridging my faith and pop-culture in music. I can think about God no matter what music I'm listening to. I like Radiohead because they remind me of my place in the world. Their music makes me think that the little things in life that bother me are insignificant, compared to the greatness of God's love.

Music is what we make it. Sure, if we take every lyric spat out by Bon Scott of AC/DC seriously we're going to be offended. But taken lightly in its goofy style, this rebel-rock band, like many others out there today, is a lot of fun. Fun is something Presbyterians, like all humans, can always use.

So instead of criticizing secular culture and music, embrace it. Make the best out of it. You might surprise yourself when you discover that your favourite rock band has inspirational lyrics buried away that you, as a Christian, are proud to shout!

James Kendall is an engineering student in Montreal. Check out his blog at <http://www.livejournal.com/users/jameskendall>.



## DIRT ROADS TO A GREATER FAITH

*Mission worker learns how little it takes to have faith*

<BY HARRISON SMITH>



PHOTOS: MALCOLM SMITH



**Top:** Shanna Bush, Jen Muir, Harrison Smith, and Nicki Waines from St. Paul's with two new friends at Escuela Joyas de Cristo in Hainamosa, Dominican Republic. **Bottom:** A few of the 300 children attending the program pose for a picture.

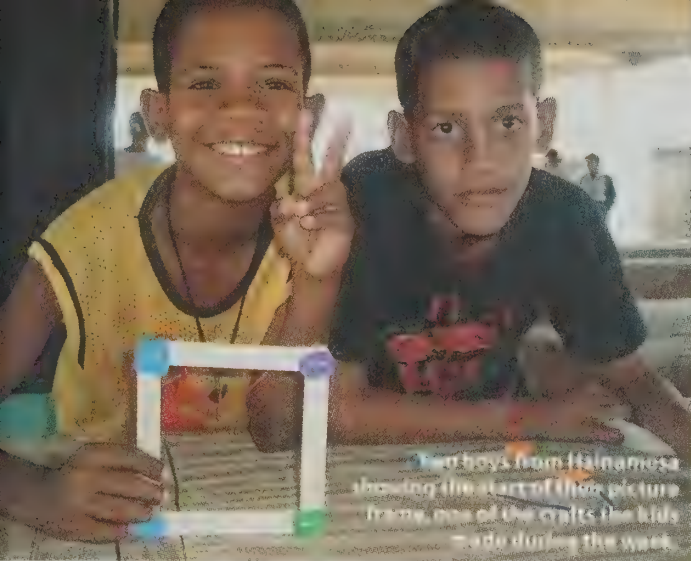
Last January, six adults and 10 teens from St. Paul's, Leaksdale, Ont., went to the Dominican Republic. After months of preparation, gathering supplies and getting to know each other, we set off for Hainamosa. After a long flight, we gathered our luggage and boarded a small bus with a smashed windshield and not enough seats. For half an hour, we travelled dirt roads — traffic laws seemed nonexistent.

We soon turned into the even dirtier, bumpier and narrower streets of Hainamosa. Garbage piles littered the streets and sidewalks, and children ran barefoot playing with the few possessions they had.

During the week we lived in cramped quarters in Pastor Jose Lopez's house with his family. Our main goal for the week was to run a vacation bible school for the children who were associated with the Jewels of Christ school and church. There were about 300 kids involved. We also did some maintenance and repair work.

We looked at these people and thought: "How do these people survive?" Our point of view was partly because of all the stories we had been hearing about how sad and desperate and needy these people were. However, despite the poor con-





Two boys from Itanamasu showing the start of their picture frame. One of the crafts the kids made during the work.



ditions in the community, few possessions, and patched homes, they seemed to be much happier than we are in Canada.

In the short week that we were there, I came to realize how little you really need to be happy. They had food, water, shelter, a school and a church. But most importantly they had God.

They had a resounding faith that brought them much joy. The Christians we met were focused on their mission to bring the word of God to the rest of their town.

We went expecting to teach them and do stuff for them but ended up learning a lot from them.

Harrison Smith is in grade nine.

## MISSION IS IN HER BLOOD

*Faith motivates her to travel and help where she can*

< BY KENDRA SHAW >

**O**n July 4, I found myself in the departure lounge of Pearson International in Toronto, waiting to leave for Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. These were the destinations for the July Youth in Mission project. Getting here, for me, has been a lifelong journey. As long as I can remember I've had a passion and desire to travel to different countries and to participate in mission. Now I was combining these two longings.

As I look back I see many factors that helped form these desires. Perhaps one of the most important is hereditary. My mom, Linda Shaw, had been a missionary appointed by The Presbyterian Church in Canada to work in a remote part of Lesotho, Africa. I was wrapped in a traditional Basotho blanket at my baptism, so maybe these desires are also part of my spiritual DNA. And while we don't often think of Canada as a mission field (though it is hardly the Kingdom of Heaven on earth), my father, Ian Shaw, was appointed to Biggar, Sask., as an ordained missionary.

And that might also account for some of my travel urges. Our family was always going places. When I was eight months old, we drove from Saskatchewan to General Assembly in London, Ont. (I even had my picture show up in the *Presbyterian Record*!) I've been from coast to coast in Canada, visited about 20 different states in the U.S., and have been to Cuba!

Equally important as travelling to other places, are the number of people from other places I've met. We have often hosted missionaries doing deputation at our church. And we have also hosted many international university students from about a dozen different countries. I have had so many fascinating opportunities to learn about other people, places and cultures. As a result, my level of interest in the wider world has been raised

and a sense of comfort interacting with people from different lands and beliefs has developed.

After some deep soul-searching and prayer I came upon a poster for YIM advertising upcoming trips to Guatemala, Mistawasis, Sask., and Central Europe. The one that really stood out to me was the latter to Romania, Ukraine and Hungary. I'd seen a couple of documentaries on these countries, Romania in particular, and always had a desire to go there. Also, two friends of mine had participated in this trip last year and I'd been enthralled by their experiences. My mom has also been to Romania and I was deeply moved by her stories. All in all, I felt that this was what God was leading me to do this summer, so I applied and I was accepted! Since then, I've continued to feel totally driven to do this. I have such a desire to meet the people I'm going to encounter

and have the opportunity to share my faith. I'm looking forward to serving God in different ways in these countries. I know that I will be pushed physically, emotionally and spiritually and that I will grow as a Christian. I also hope to encounter much about the culture and grow out of my North American bubble. I'm especially looking forward to working with the children of these countries and I'm looking forward to interacting with the Gypsy people.

I totally feel that it is my faith that is driving me to do this. To give up all that is familiar to me and to stretch myself. I know that God will use me to serve Him and bring glory to His name.

Kendra Shaw thanks her home congregation of Westwood, Winnipeg, for their support, financial and otherwise.





## DISCOVERING THE SERVANT HEART

*If you have not love, you gain nothing*

<BY MARY M. WOOD>

Since the age of nine I've been serving alongside my family on Tuesday nights at a homeless shelter at our church. Most nine-year-olds wouldn't want to be hanging around with homeless teenagers, but somehow it was something I looked forward to every week. Now, eight years later, I still keep in touch with youth I've met and enjoy watching some of them take steps to create better lives for themselves.

Out of the Cold is an interfaith program that relies on volunteers to feed the homeless in our city and give them a warm, safe place to sleep. My parents help lead the program at our own church, which has the only Out of the Cold for youth under 25. Serving there through the years has certainly opened our eyes to the pain in this world. My 16-year-old friends are into creating music, eating healthy, part-time jobs — the usual stuff. The majority of teenagers who attend our program already have a lifetime of hurt behind them. Most have been separated from their families, have about a grade eight education, an addiction to drugs and, in many cases, they suffer from depression or other serious mental illness.

Instead of giving these kids the cold shoulder like many of their own parents, our amazing volunteers set an example for many, including myself, by welcoming them with open arms. They do everything they can to make the guests enjoy themselves and they offer love — without judgment — to those most in need.

It hasn't always been easy for my sister and I. Sometimes it was hard to give up our parents one night each week. And I was annoyed at one guest, only 16 at the time, who was sent to jail. I was frustrated because she got so much love and attention from my parents, and she wasn't even part of our family. I soon realized that love is the basis of our program.

1 Corinthians 13:3 states: "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. "Without the agape that our volunteers give to the youth, our program wouldn't mean much and wouldn't affect the lives of those who attend. My parents and the other volunteers have been major role models for me. They have showed me what a servant heart really is. Just like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, so we should serve the needs of the ones who are the most in need of love. No matter how smelly, tough, or bitter they may be, all are in need of love. And what's more, loving others truly does bring joy!

This program has been both a blessing and a struggle. It's been hard at times for my whole family to hear about the problems that the guests have: hearing about addictions, depression and deaths. We usually can't solve these problems, we can only listen. Watching others struggle breaks my heart; however, it has also given me so much compassion for others and has been a motivation for many of the volunteers to want to help the guests get back onto their feet. One of the joys of the program is when we get to witness so many of our regular guests, whom we've watched struggle, get apartments, and begin a better life.

Having my family so immersed in this program has created a new dimension to how we view life. Life is most certainly a gift we should share. The experiences we have dealt with throughout our time serving at Out of the Cold have made each and every one of us more compassionate towards others, more thankful for all we have, and gave us a new love for life.

---

Mary M. Wood, 16, is a member of Knox, Spadina, Toronto.

## DAN BROWN'S EASTER

*The wrong message on the right day makes him wonder what's really important*

<BY STEPHEN ORTICELLO>

Easter Sunday is the warmest day so far this spring, providing perfect blue skies for the year's most joyous event. Approaching the church, my grandfather waits for me outside, a wide bright smile on his face reflecting my own. I'm already anticipating the huge lunch my grandmother has prepared. Without fail, another Easter has put me in a wonderfully happy mood.

Midway through the service the congregation is directed to sit and the homily begins. We are fortunate this year to have the diocesan bishop presiding at mass and preaching and I'm a

little eager to hear what he has to say. Ten minutes in and we've already been comfortably reminded that through Christ our sins have been forgiven and that eternal salvation is now attainable. My eyes feel slightly heavier and I get a little more comfortable in my seat.

Suddenly there's a change.

The bishop begins speaking with such force and charisma that his passion cannot be ignored. The change catches us off guard, but soon we're absorbing each gesticulated word that leaves his mouth. We're pulled toward him and he has perhaps

I wonder what has become of my religion when its leaders preach more on popular culture than the starving millions in sub-Saharan Africa?

the most attentive congregation he could wish for and this isn't because he's talking about God. It's because he's talking about *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.

For the next 25 minutes we're told that the heretic pagan author Brown is trying to dismantle the Roman Catholic Church like so many others and that as true Christians we are in no way to entertain the immensely popular words that litter his pages. Brown is spreading lies and is an immense threat to our fundamental beliefs. I think the bishop even said reading the book was a sin, but I coughed at this point so can't be sure.

I left the church with a frighteningly strong feeling in my stomach, a combination of frustration and disgust and one that has not left me since. Hmm, this wasn't the Easter Sunday feeling I was used to; what had happened?

I'm a 26-year-old man who is no stranger to university, college, television and world travel. I have seen, read and heard many things and am no idiot when it comes to global issues. We're inundated with issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, war, cancer and the environment. It's at the point that the suffering of this planet and its people can be viewed and felt 24 hours a day, seven days a week practically wherever you go. There is work to be done and saying that you don't know how to help or aren't even aware of the problems has become an old and tired cliché.

And here I was warned about the dangers of a work of fiction by an author no one had even heard of until a few years ago. A sermon given by a religious structure fearful of losing even more of its members through the simple act of reading.

Easter Sunday 2005: The world needs help, always has, always will and my church is afraid of Brown and his scythe-like words.

I have a feeling that sitting in a crowd on a hill before Jesus on a warm Sunday much like this one, I would not have walked away with a sick stomach. I think Jesus would have talked about what expression of love really means and that no matter what people say or do we are all loved and cared for by God. Even when some Dan Brown-types hurled some insults from outside the crowd, Jesus wouldn't have cared. Jesus had faith in Himself and his believers.

I wonder what has become of my religion when its leaders preach more on popular culture than the starving millions in sub-saharan Africa? Maybe I should read *The Da Vinci Code* and see what it's all about.

Stephen Orticello is a student of English and Journalism. He worked last year at the WMS Book Room at Presbyterian offices in Toronto.

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# Telling the story; living the story

*Classical Protestantism's tenets threatened in post-Christian world*

BY DOUGLAS JOHN HALL

Christianity is no longer the automatic or assumed religion of this society, and as Christian ministers we are no longer members of a professional guild which, like law or medicine, can assume that it has a well-respected place in society; we belong, rather, to a community of faith that is in many ways under duress, is frequently misunderstood and suspect within its social context and is itself rather uncertain of its mission and its place in its world. This is especially the case, I would say, with the old Protestant churches of what is called the 'main-line' — not only, but more particularly, in their North American expressions. Like many other observers of the religious situation today, I am deeply concerned for the Protestant future.

Classical Protestantism is in particular danger today. Especially but not only on this North American continent, it is being displaced by forms of 'Protestantism', so-called, that have very little in common with the main heritage of the Reformation. The Encyclopaedia of Protestantism calls these newer forms of Protestantism "wider Protestantism", as distinct from 'classical' or 'core' Protestantism. This 'Wider Protestantism', as the Encyclopaedia points out, tends to be ultra-conservative, Biblicist, fundamentalist. And such is the mood of our times that, wherever Protestantism seems to be gaining numbers, both here and in the so-called developing world, it is this Protestantism that is growing.

Frequently, and especially in the United States of America, it is associated with the most right wing of political powers and with unchecked capitalistic economics. It stands for a religious certitude in which there is no room for doubt or questioning; it stands for clear-cut distinctions between believers and non-

believers; and it stands for a rigid morality that makes straightforward distinctions between good and evil and excludes, by definition, all who do not adhere to its doctrinal and moral presuppositions. This kind of Protestantism, if it warrants being called such, has no problem at all determining what its mission in the post-Christian society might be: it wants to reverse the trends, to regain the lapsed, to evangelize non-Christians, to reconstitute Christendom.

Classical Protestantism cannot, for instance, rejoice over a biblical literalism that ignores not only modern but also 16th Century Reformation attitudes towards the Holy Scriptures. None of the central reformers would have endorsed such literalism. Nor can classical Protestantism embrace a faith in Jesus as the Christ that excludes dialogue with other faith traditions; to the contrary, the authenticity of our faith in Jesus today is shown by the same kind of openness to others that Jesus himself, according to the scriptures, always demonstrated.

Classical Protestantism also taught its adherents to carry on a dialogue with the world of skepticism and unbelief; for all their enthusiasm for divine revelation, the reformers never meant that human reason and experience should be bypassed or ignored, as so many of the most militant Protestants in the US and elsewhere today want to ignore scientific theory in favour of literalistic interpretations of scripture and rigidity of dogma. It is impossible to study the lives of the reformers without realizing again and again that they worked out their theology through intellectual struggle and never-ending discourse with all the objections and alternatives to faith. They were not 'true believers' in the contemporary sense; they were persons whose

prayer, like that of the biblical father who sought Jesus' help, was 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.'

Yet while we, who are the inheritors of this classical Protestantism, know to a greater or lesser extent what our approach and our mission must not be, we are rather confused, I think, about what it could be and should be. The Protestant traditions that we have inherited were developed, classically, in a world that was still rather monolithically if nominally 'Christian'. We find it hard to adapt the principles of Reformation Protestantism to a social context that is post-Christian. So again I ask: What is our mission today?

About five years ago, I was part of a remarkable seminar in which precisely this question was the confronting question of our discussion — and not just for an hour or two, but for two entire months. This was the Campbell Seminar, a project of Columbia Presbyterian Seminary in the city of greater Atlanta. Five of us professional theologians from five different parts of the planet met every day for several hours with two well-known American Presbyterian clergy, under the moderatorship of the Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann. Our mandate from the seminary was to address precisely the question I am asking here: "What is the mission of the church in the 21st century?" We were told we didn't even have to produce anything; but since we were all Protestant workaholics we did produce, in fact, a great deal. It is collected in a book entitled, *Hope for the World*.

As the title of that book already suggests, it was the consensus of this group of widely representative Reformed Christians that the mission of the church in our time has primarily to do with the

promulgation of hope — hope, not just in a vague and otherworldly sense, but hope that is intended for the life of this difficult and besieged planet and all its creatures. In order to pinpoint our findings, we formulated them in a single proposition or thesis, answering the question ‘What is the mission of the church in the 21st Century?’ This is how we answered: ‘The mission of the Christian Movement in the 21st century is to

nants of classical Protestantism in these old denominations of ours. How can we take on a mission of hope in a despairing world when we ourselves are so reluctant to express the extent of our own despair, and so uncertain how the gospel of Jesus Christ can speak to it?

In our Atlanta seminar, we all — from every part of the planet — acknowledged the great seriousness of this question. And therefore we developed a kind of

ian, the manager and CEO of the congregation. Sociological and other studies of the actual practice ministry have shown that clergy, over the past decades, have spent very little time indeed in personal study — even in the preparation of their sermon and other explicit teaching responsibilities. Clergy have been assessed by their congregations and denominations, chiefly, on the basis of their ability as organizers and administrators of their

## **How can we take on a mission of hope in a despairing world when we ourselves are so reluctant to express the extent of our own despair, and so uncertain how the gospel of Jesus Christ can speak to it?**

confess hope in action.’ Now, that simple sentence contains some very complex thought, and I cannot exegesis it fully in this short address.

I will only note the following implications:

- Our Christian mission focused on hope today because what we perceive of the dominant attitude of human beings in the world at large is an attitude of open or covert hopelessness. We lack, as humans, a viable, working hope—in particular hope for our world. Too much religion wants to show us an escape hatch from this world. But this is God’s world, God’s beloved creation; as Bonhoeffer said, it must not be written off prematurely!

- The hope that we are to confess as Christians is not merely a rhetorical hope, it must be expressed in action and not only in words. It must be translated into an ethic that maximizes life and refuses to give way to death, decay and the demonic. Our hope must be a hope that we confess, not only something that we profess.

This is a very large order, of course. For the unfortunate truth of the matter is that, in these old churches of ours, we are ourselves rather uncertain what a ‘gospel of hope’ would mean. Most of our members and adherents are two or three generations removed from the time when Bible study was part of the life of the Christian community. Many Protestants, overawed by the seemingly unquestioning belief of the conservative Christians who dominate the media, feel that there is no room for their doubt in the life of faith — but they have doubts, they do doubt, and at a very fundamental level. There is, in short, a great deal of confusion among the rem-

nant, or a guideline, for dealing with it. “In the church, tell the story; in the world, live the story.” This is a time in the history of our faith, we believed, when it is necessary for the church itself to concentrate on understanding what it believes. We must tell the story — the Gospel story — in the church. It does not mean that we should cease acting in the world — certainly not; but it does mean that we must clarify for ourselves, as church, as congregations, what it is that we believe and what should be the ethical consequences of such belief.

For congregations to have such a goal, the principle task of the minister is clear. She or he must become the inspirer and catalyst for a new and vital and disciplined contemplation of scripture and tradition on the part of those who continue to associate with the church. He or she must become the teacher, the theologian of the congregation. His or her own struggle to comprehend and live the gospel must be opened into the life of the congregation as a whole. Together, minister and congregation must become a synagogue of dialogue and the prayerful quest for wisdom. This is of course no new idea, really. It belongs to the very core of the Reformed tradition that the minister is the “teaching elder” of the congregation; and such a concept of ministry reaches way back into the faith of ancient Israel, especially to the rabbinic tradition.

Somehow, I think, this way of understanding ministry was lost in the modern period, especially in the 20th century. We were seduced by the spirit of that age to think that the minister was to be a kind of jack of all trades, the professional Christ-

churches. It has been, in fact, a business and professional model of ministry, not a teaching model, that has dominated the mainline denominations of Protestantism throughout the past several decades — most of my lifetime.

This, I am convinced, must change. If what the Reformation of the 16th century and subsequent expressions of classical Protestantism is to survive and grow, it will depend chiefly, if not wholly, on clergy who are ready to leave a great deal of the organizational and other stewardly work to competent laity and take up for themselves new and imaginative expressions of the ‘teaching eldership.’ During the past three or more years, you who are graduating tonight have been privileged to spend your hours acquiring a studied grasp of the principle things of this faith. It is now your calling to help others to know and to practice this faith. You are not excused from some manner of participation all the other tasks that befall ministers in the natural course of their service; but you are called to concentrate your energies on this rabbinic calling — to be ‘the teaching elder.’ As Paul says, “Not all are teachers.” But you are. This is your calling. May you follow it with diligence and with joy!

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Rev. Dr. Douglas John Hall is Emeritus Professor of Christian Theology, McGill University in Montreal. He is the author of more than 20 books including *The End of Christendom* and *The Future of Christianity*. The Atlanta study was published by Westminster John Knox Press in 2001. This article is an excerpt from his talk at the 161st convocation of Knox College, Toronto. The full speech can be found on Knox website: <http://www.utoronto.ca/knox>.





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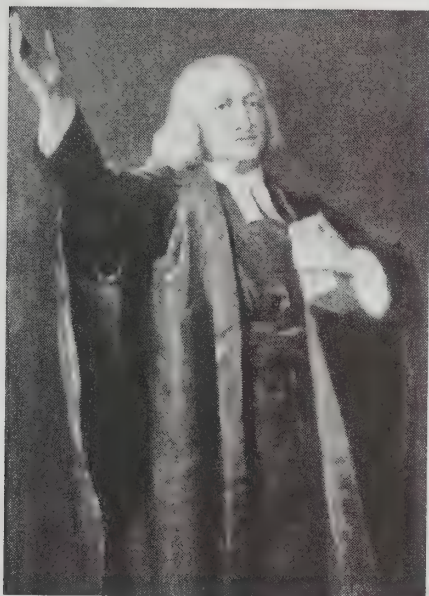
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# Wesleyan foundations created Canada

*His social activism mixed with orthodoxy are now sadly forgotten*



I'm about to make my annual visit to Britain, the land of my birth and where I spent the first 27 years of my life. Also the country of John Wesley, who was born a little over 300 years ago. Wesley was, of course, the founder of Methodism, an evangelical grouping that began within the Church of England but eventually found life more comfortable as a separate denomination. Today, sadly, it is in decline throughout most of the world. In Canada most Methodists joined the United Church, a denomination shrinking away before our eyes.

There are still a few Methodist churches that remained detached and thrive, and indeed the United Church does tremendous work in many areas. But the church of Wesley was something different. And something so very grand and great.

Thing is, to a large extent Wesley laid the foundations for the Canada we know and love. The welfare and care society we have here was based strongly on the British model and that in turn was part of the old Labour Party tradition. A Labour

**We have been polarized. If we care for the poor and the helpless, we are obliged to champion immorality. If we stand up for the family, we are supposed to obsess about law and order and low taxes**

Party, it was always said, that owed more to Methodism than to Marx. In other words, a social democratic party that rejected the extremism of Marxism and embraced the fraternity and justice approach of Christ.

Thus Labour Party activists and their Canadian social and political reformer friends across the sea looked not to revolution but to an evolution of fairness, social balance and a partial closing of the economic chasm. So appealing was this approach that until recently it was the overriding political philosophy not only of left-wing parties but of centrist and conservative ones as well.

Just to show how influential John Wesley actually was, it has always been said that he was the reason that Britain did not have a French style revolution in the late 18th century. Parisian aristocrats were prepared to ignore popular suffering but the British ruling class was pressurized by Wesley and his followers to introduce sweeping reforms. Never enough, of course, but sufficient to convince the people that society was worth changing peacefully rather than overthrowing by hysterical violence.

The ending of the extraordinarily lucrative slave trade was largely the triumph of Wesley's people; influential politicians such as William Wilberforce, Tory by nature but swept along by the social gospel of Methodism.

Similarly with the ending of child labour and the improvement of living conditions for the urban working class, a Christian-based social justice was the cause. The point was, however, that these campaigners never compromised their or-

thodox Christian faith in their fight for societal change. Sadly, today we seem to have lost most of that bipartisan tradition.

Supposed Christians on the left have all too frequently abandoned God and the Bible and made socialism and relativism their idol. On the other side of the church, more traditional believers have remained true to the faith but have too often looked to the political right and ignored their great heritage.

Of course there are many exceptions to this but Wesley himself would hardly recognize the church he created. He would also be staggered at the reversing of the progress made over the years in Canada as well as in Britain, both in terms of the lowering of moral standards and the decaying of public ethics, as well as the adoration of wealth and materialism.

We have been polarized. If we care for the poor and the helpless, we are obliged to champion immorality. If we stand up for the family, we are supposed to obsess about law and order and low taxes. No, no, no. It does not have to be that way. He knew it and so do many of us still. Political party means nothing anymore.

I shall raise a glass, teetotal or not, to the man who changed the world for the better and is not always recognized as such. As I look around at the various political leaders of this country, it breaks my heart that none of them could even walk in good John's shadow. Time for a long overdue change. ✂

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Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# The slow goodbye

*Getting ready for a trip. Packing light. Going home*

Comedy was not my first choice. I wanted to be strong and good-looking. I was neither. So my dad tried to console me, "Poverty is hereditary," he said, "you get it from your children."

A sense of humour is, too. I got it from my dad.

For the most part, comedians come from either of two backgrounds: severely depressed or extremely happy. There is seldom middle ground. I grew up in a family where laughter was a staple. Where my parents loved each other and loved their children. My earliest memories are of Mom reading me *Winnie the Pooh* and Dad hiding in darkened rooms waiting to scare the living daylights out of me. Each of our three children has at some point experienced me pulling back their collars and sneezing down their necks. I got the idea from my dad.

The older I get, the more this sense of humour is coming in handy.

Mom and Dad lie in separate beds in the same hospital now, not quite knowing where they are. Each time I visit they ask me about it, so I explain it to them like it's the first time and the lights come on, then quickly fade. I once asked my dad the secret to their lengthy marriage and his eyes twinkled. "Senility," he said.

It was funny back then.

But now the two old lovers are saying a slow goodbye to this earth, surrounded by children who love them and nurses whose sweetness surprises me at times.

The phone woke me one morning. It was Dad. "Someone stole my pants," he said. "Where's my billfold? Can you bring me some money?" I told him I was loaded, I'd be right over. "Hurry," he said, "I'm going to see a movie." My father hasn't stepped inside a movie

theater since becoming a Christian 60 years ago. By the time I arrived he had been out riding the range with Roy Rogers and the two were planning on roping cattle together. Seeing me, he said, "What are you doing here? Don't you work?"

Some doctors call it Dementia. Others Alzheimer's. None of us dreamed it would come to this.

Yesterday, my mother — a woman I have seen share her faith with leather-clad bikers, the girl who led me to Christ when I was a lad — was convinced that God had abandoned her. I was stroking her white hair and singing "Jesus led me all the way" when this spiritual giant of a woman, who stands less than five feet now, interrupted. "No he didn't," she said indignantly.

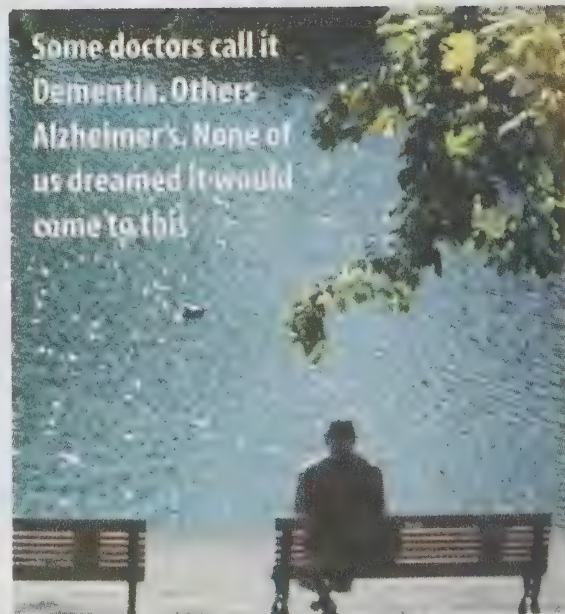
"You mean Jesus?" I asked, "When did he stop?"

"Last Wednesday." And she was serious. Doubts come and go.

But tonight she is listening to beautiful hymns on a CD player she can't operate and smiling with her eyes closed. "Tell me about the kids," she says.

I've brought along a book and I read it to my mother out loud. It is the same tattered copy of *Winnie the Pooh* that she read to me when I was four. "How cold my toes... tiddly-pom," I sing using a tune she taught me.

I'm tough. I don't cry easily. But as I leave tonight, I take part again in this grand role reversal, whispering goodnight to the woman who tucked me in with a thousand goodnight kisses.



"God bless you," I say. "He does," she smiles, "He gave me you." Then she motions my daughter Rachael to her bedside. "Bernice loves you," she says. "Say it after me so you'll never forget. Bernice loves me." Rachael smiles and wipes a tear.

Dad is seated in a nearby chair, getting ready for a trip, he says. Going back to Ontario where he spent his boyhood. Gonna see the tall oak trees and swim in the Elora Gorge. He smiles as he tells me this and I wonder if it's not the most profound thing he's uttered in years. We're all getting ready for a trip, aren't we? Packing light. Going home.

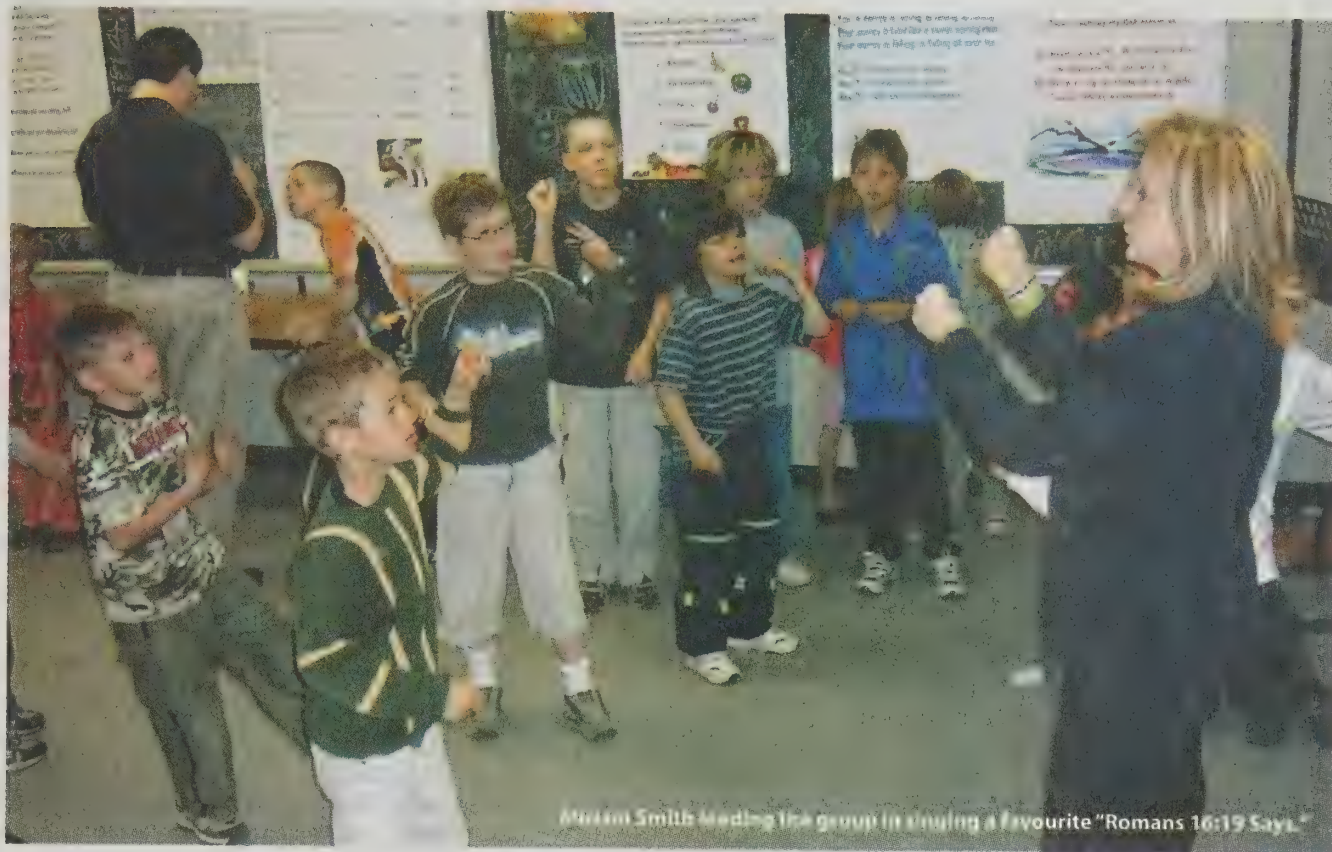
Outside, Rachael wants to drive. I can't believe she's already 16. "Will you visit me when I'm old?" I ask, wiping tears and fumbling for the car keys. She smiles her agreement. "I need a hug," I say. She leans close. Ah yes, I can feel a sneeze coming on. ☺

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# Kids zoom to KidsZone

*A unique worship service that respects children*

BY MALCOLM SMITH



Malcolm Smith leading the group in singing a favourite "Romans 16:19 Say."

**G**ood morning. Could you take Justyne with you to church today?"

It started several weeks earlier when our daughter Jacqueline invited her friend Justyne to KidsZone. Now she wanted to go again and her mother was asking us to pick her up.

So... what is KidsZone you ask?

KidsZone is a program for children in grades one to five at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont. Thirty to 40 energetic children attend the hour-long program which runs during the service and includes music, games, storytelling, sharing and a ton of fun.

Each week starts with a sharing time

while the entire group sits in a circle on the floor. It is an opportunity to learn about each other, find out what is important, and to share in their lives. Children take turns sharing a talent such as playing the piano or singing. A few weeks earlier, Jacqueline and Justyne sang a few songs that they learned together in the local youth choir.

A monthly celebration of birthdays allows each child to be the focus of attention for a short period of time and gives everyone something to look forward to. Each birthday child gets to take an item from a grab bag filled with inexpensive items.

Each visitor is welcomed to the en-

tire group. No one is left out. Kids get to know each other really well and quickly develop a sense of community.

Forty young children can be very active so the challenge is to create an environment that is exciting and fun while safe and calm enough for learning to happen. Proper discipline is critical but it is never about keeping kids quiet and still. Different people will have different comfort levels so the trick is to find a balance that works.

Include things that you are good at. Crafts were added after a church member approached the group and asked if she could do crafts. It was fun for the kids, got another church mem-





Devin Snell showing off his craft for Mom.



Jacqueline Smith posing in front of the poster showing the KidsZone mission project to raise money to buy animals through World Vision.



KidsZone kids working on a Mother's day bracelet craft

ber involved and added no stress to the current leader. On the other hand, a puppet theatre was built for a puppet program that never got off the ground because there was no owner. Use the gifts and passions that God brings into the ministry. Don't try to do too much. It will be exhausting, zap your joy, and it won't be done well. Focus! It is much harder to get burned out when you are part of a team.

Music is a big part of the program. Words for the songs are posted around the room so that all kids, including those new to KidsZone, can join in. Sing a variety of songs; fast paced, slow, wild and crazy, calm and quiet. Find someone who loves kids and music and has a real sense of worship.

Kids love games. The three games played most often are Bible Jeopardy, Sword Drill and Hangman. The group is usually split into two, which compete

against each other. Topics for games, such as Bible Jeopardy categories and sentences or words for Hangman, vary by the week and are tied to the season or topic being studied; imagine "Biblical Mothers for 500" on Mother's Day.

Each week includes a Bible lesson given in the form of a story as Jesus might give. It has four main goals: to be relevant, short, interesting and applicable.

1. The topics chosen must have some relevance to the children.

2. Keep it short. Any longer than 15 minutes and you start to lose the kids. Use the music and games to reinforce the topic, and the kids will get much more out of it and remember what was taught.

3. Make it interesting. Bring in newspaper articles. Give personal examples. Find unfamiliar stories in the Bible to support your topic. Research the topic on the internet for interesting angles.

4. Make it applicable. Give the kids one thing to work on during the week ahead of them.

The KidsZone kids are learning to share what God has given them. A mission project is underway to raise money to buy farm animals through World Vision. Being a farming community, this project resonates with the children. Picking a project that the kids can get excited about is critical. The children are encouraged to bring an offering and are seeing their money grow and are excited about the animals they will send.

When we dropped off Justyne at home after another fun morning, her parents asked about our church. It won't be long before we see them there too. *PS*

Malcolm Smith is co-leader of KidsZone along with his wife Miriam, and Gord Simmonds. According to their gifts the three split their duties. Gord looks after the games, Miriam the music and Malcolm the stories.

# Stop the cycle of violence

*Religious fanatics are a challenge to all Abrahamic faiths*

BY BERNARD SABELLA

The London bombings clearly illustrate that a war is going on. This war is fuelled on the one side by religious fanatics who use, really abuse, religion for their own misled conception of the world divided between the righteous and those outside the bounds of righteousness. Political and other differences with the non-righteous justify, in these fanatics' eyes, mounting massive attacks to specifically drive the point home to their adversaries that there is no geographic or time limit in the ongoing war.

But the fanaticism of these religious zealots on the Muslim side is met with fanaticism on other religious sides. Thus the portrayal by some Christian groups, particularly in the United States, of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the War on Terror, as also driven or motivated by the sort of "Onward Christian Soldiers" mentality, contributes to the perception of these wars as primarily religious. In the Arab-Israeli conflict there are influential forces on all sides that reduce the conflict to religion, oblivious to the national, political, economic, strategic and other considerations.

Some Christian Zionist and other Christian Right groups would pray and actively hope for Armageddon, the biblical end of days heralded by the second coming of Christ, irrespective of the human, environmental and other costs to Christian, Muslim and Jew. In their zealous support for Israel, these Christian fundamentalist groups are willing to sacrifice everything and everybody for the fulfillment of the biblical prophecy of Armageddon. On the Jewish side, religious fundamentalists, particularly settler groups, have their own wars motivated by religion and its prescriptions. The Jewish populating of the Promised Land makes all other rights irrelevant. That the land is populated by Arab Palestinians is beside the point; the important thing is that Yahweh's Will be done, irrespective of the damage inflicted on neighbours and their rights.

Islam, Christianity and Judaism have a serious problem as they have allowed fringe and not-so fringe groups among them to set the agenda. The world today, particularly in its religious monotheistic component, is in deep crisis: the London bombings are unfortunately one tragic example; the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan another and the situation in Palestine a third. Other examples of horror and terror could be added irrespective of the monotheistic religious background of the perpetrators.

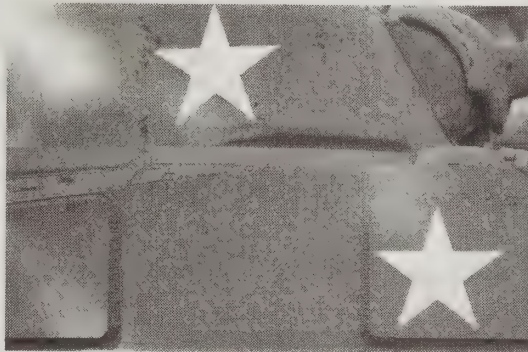
The argument often propounded that the common Abrahamic roots of these three religions would supposedly help us overcome our differences may in fact be a fallacy. While the solutions to our various complex problems and issues definitely lie in political, economic and strategic venues; believers of monotheistic religions have not done enough to distance their religions from the use of violence and terror in their names. Monotheistic religions are in need of a grand strategy of education and socialization aimed at mutual understanding away from violence and terror: religious establishments may not be willing

to cooperate on the development of such a strategy.

Believers who are out there in the public, civil, secular, business and other spheres are invited to

challenge their religious establishments towards contemplating work on this grand strategy. Wars and military intervention would not secure peace, democracy and reconciliation among adherents of the monotheistic religions; terror attacks would only add to the polarization and stereotyping already out there. We, who still believe in the moral, religious, ethical power of our respective religions, should move to stop the cycle of senseless violence and war.

Dr. Bernard Sabella is the Executive Director of the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees for the Middle East Council of Churches. He is also Associate Professor of Sociology at Bethlehem University in Jerusalem.



**Wars and military intervention would not secure peace, democracy and reconciliation among adherents of the monotheistic religions; terror attacks would only add to the polarization and stereotyping already out there**

The opinions expressed in this column are not those of the *Presbyterian Record* but of the author.



# Drowning out the drones

*Our cultural cacophony often makes us feel separate*

BY ANDREW FAIZ

*Music makes the people come together  
Music makes the bourgeoisie and the  
rebel. — MADONNA*

The article this month was to be about Live 8. I had nearly completed it — it wasn't bad. I didn't have a strong conclusion but the middle was good: scruffy rockers in cool shades unite the world with music. I then meditated on forms of worship and spirituality as those thoughts overwhelmed me during the concert.

I was moved by the concert, sharing a message with millions around the planet. How everybody else absorbed the message, I was going to argue, was as varied as the ways millions of worshippers absorb the Christian message each Sunday morning. Some take it to heart and act upon the Word, others merely pass the time out of habit and guilt. It really doesn't matter, what matters is millions share in the process.

But, that was that article. Less than a week from the concert, bombs exploded in London and that sense of unity disappeared. The world once more seemed broken and separated. The cracks in our human foundations were obvious. The concert seemed only a pathetic diversion from reality.

The world has changed since 9/11, as it is commonly called. Or, more accurately, our North American world view has changed since that fateful Tuesday morning. Over 3,000 people over three decades have been murdered in terrorist attacks in England alone. Bombings have been commonplace across Europe for decades.

But, those were political actions —

the terrorizers hated the government for its policies. What Bob Geldof did with LiveAid and Live 8, Beider Meinhoff, IRA and others did with live grenades: petition world leaders to change their point of view. The little taste we had of that in Canada, the October Crisis, seems quaint today. The issues the FLQ wanted to highlight quickly gave way to civil liberty arguments arising from the War Measures Act.

But the terrorists today — these aren't well scrubbed middle-class kids angry at

Left believes core values are threatened (these two groups have so much in common). Definitions wander, rhetoric soars and the other remains elusive.

The rhetoric — the professional pundits always at full speed — only adds to the cracks in our spiritual unity. It's a cacophony of specialized voices screaming their specialized interests. The left, the right, the secular, the religious, the fanatic, the agnostic, the fundamentalist Muslim or Christian or Jew, the righteous, the self-important, the commercial, the non-profit, the political, the non-governmental, the sincere, the hateful and the self-professed lover of humanity all add to that deafening

white noise crowding our thoughts daily. They create the other; they are the balkanization of our society.

Perhaps, after all, this article is about Live 8. It might have been a false moment, it might have been a self-righteous moment, but it was one in which a brief unity was achieved. It used the good tools of our culture: popular music and television. It reached millions and was put together in a matter of weeks by the force of sheer will. That will — not just Geldof's or Bono's, but that of the thousands around the planet that made it happen so quickly — was born of a simple idea: Make Poverty History.

It erased the other. It shared humanity for a brief 12 hours. And it was fun. ✂

Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the *Record*. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca). This column and all other editorial material in the magazine are available at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).

**But, something failed them, failed the whole country in fact, and they became the isolated fanatic with bombs in backpacks riding public transportation**

their daddy's world. They are, it seems, hell-bent on hating us. They are the other.

## WHO IS THE OTHER?

But, the London bombers, it seems, were not the other. They were English born and bred — pigmented English, mind you, but born in the bosom of the isle. But, something failed them, failed the whole country in fact, and they became the other. They became the isolated fanatic with bombs in backpacks riding public transportation. Something seared their brain and they began to see their birthplace as their enemy.

## WHO IS THE OTHER?

The left argues our cultural and political sins give birth to terrorism. President George W. Bush claims the attackers hate democracy itself. Noam Chomsky claims President Bush abhors true democracy. The Christian Right believes core values are threatened (they believe that about everything). The Christian

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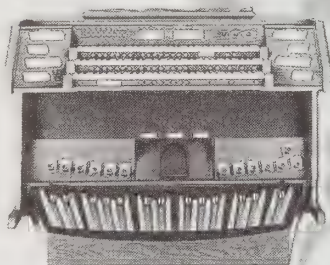
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## obituaries

**BEITH, Grace Elizabeth**, aged 78, died June 12, 2005. Long-time elder, choir member and soloist of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. Noted for community service, she became President of Telecare Canada and later, President of Lifeline International.

**CURRIE, Allister**, November 14, 1912-April 16, 2005. Served as an elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Montague, P.E.I., for 34 years and as Clerk of Session for 27 years. He was made Clerk Emeritus in January 1996. Sadly missed by all.

**DAVIDSON, W. A. Bruce**, May 8, 1914-April 28, 2005. Peacefully with faith, at home in Brockville, Ont., after a brief illness but several months of failing health. Active and faithful member/elder of New Westminster, Hamilton, Ont., Wexford Heights, Scarborough, Ont., and First Presbyterian in Brockville. Predeceased by first wife Mary in 1983. Survived by loving wife Lillian, daughters Karen and Lynn and their families. He is sadly missed and lovingly remembered by many.

**KERRIDALE PRESBYTERIAN, VANCOUVER:** The Congregation mourns the death of four long-time members and elders who faithfully served the Church, nation and community over many years: Fred Walsh, March 6; Cae Dickson, March 14; Bob Young, April 7; and Bill Mearns, May 15.

**WHITEFIELD, James Campbell**, died on March 19. Jim was a lifelong member of St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., and served on the Board of Managers and was ordained an elder in 1960. In 1973, Jim took early retirement and for the next 11 years he and his wife Kass served as volunteers for The Presbyterian Church in Canada both overseas in India, Jamaica and Nigeria and upon return to Canada Jim looked after the Mission residence in Toronto and assisted the Board of World Mission staff. Jim and Kass were honoured by General Assembly in 1984 in a minute of appreciation.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.

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# Beware the imposter

*There is only one true meal in a seeming spiritual smorgasbord*

BY DAVID WEBBER

**D**addy, Daddy, you will never guess what Mom and I saw.” Chelsea was bouncing up and down on the dock as I was paddling in from fly-fishing. It looked like she was so excited that she was going to do a two-and-a-half gainer right into the drink. I thought to myself, “Great! Some stupid ole bear stumbled into camp while I was gone.” This meant now I was going to have to convince Linda that we should stay at this camp and maybe even have to dispatch a problem bear. The truth is, I am lousy at convincing Linda of anything and I don’t like shooting bears just because they begin to hang around camp.

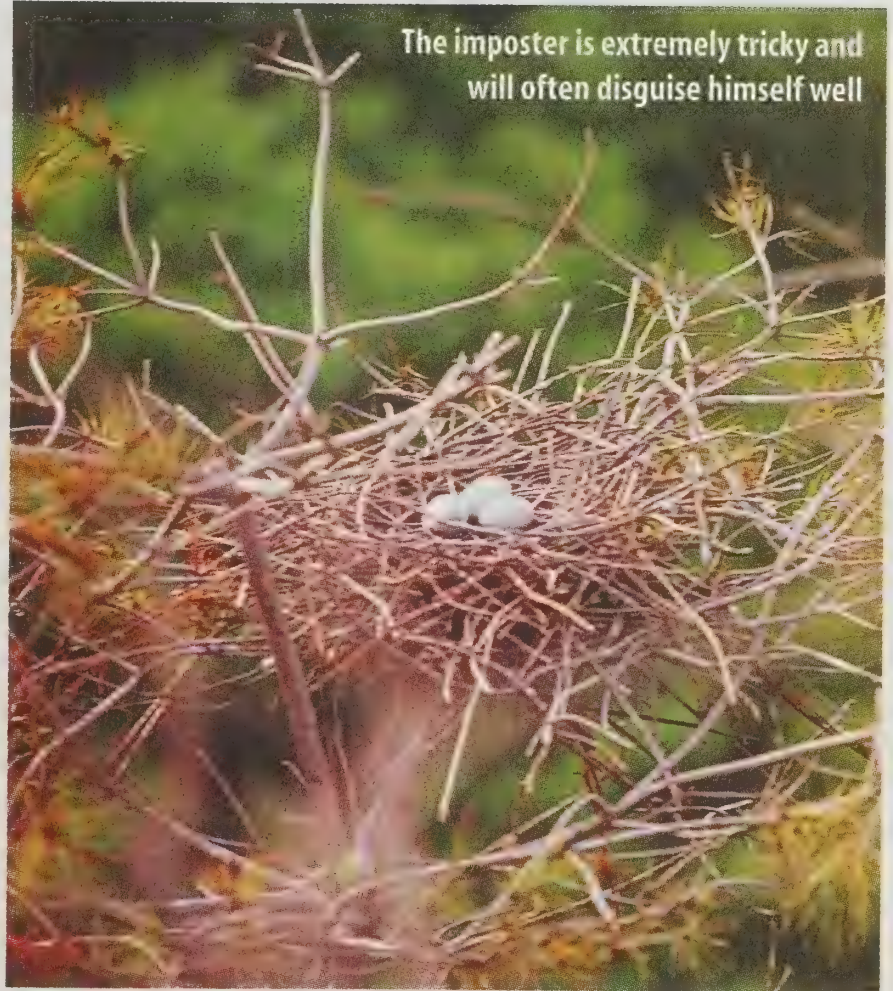
And so it was with a fair bit of reluctance that I beached the chestnut canoe and grabbed the thwart with both hands to extricate my ample butt from the narrow wicker seat. “What did you see, honey?” I asked Chelsea reluctantly.

“Mom and I were just sitting around camp and this little gray bird with a black head came and began to peck at the rolled oats I put down by the pine tree. And then this other bird that was twice its size and real ugly, awkwardly landed and sat beside it and began to scream at it. And you know what the little bird did? It hopped right over to the big bird and fed it like it was its baby. It looked really weird and it almost looked like she did it just to shut the big bird up.” Chelsea spoke a hundred miles an hour and her eyes looked the size of sandwich plates.

I breathed a sigh of relief and said, “That can’t be, honey. You must be mistaken.”

“No I am not Dad! Just go and ask Mom,” Chelsea said indignantly.

When I interrogated Linda back at camp, she confirmed Chelsea’s story and added a name to the little bird. It was a



dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*), a tiny little bird that kind of looks like a chickadee that’s been on a severe diet and dyed its head of hair jet black. Linda had no idea what kind of bird the large one was but it appeared to be kind of stupid and made a very irritating noise when it tried to sing. It definitely lived off of the small skinny black-headed female. I named them Sonny and Cher.

About a day later I was having a coffee and reading in my camp chair when

the little Cher returned. She landed almost at my feet and began to peck at the tiny seeds in the gravel. Soon an awkward and loud Sonny plopped down beside her and began to sing for all he was worth in a voice that sounded like the swinging of an unoiled squeaky gate. Cher immediately hopped over to him and he crouched down and put his head up with his beak wide open, looking like any infant bird would when being fed by its parent. Cher stretched herself as much





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as she could and stuffed some seeds right down his big gullet. That shut Sonny up for a little bit but soon he was making that awful noise again.

I knew I had heard that annoying noise before but I couldn't place it. For several minutes I sat looking and listening and then it hit me. Sonny was a fledgling brown-headed cowbird, (*Molothrus ater*) ugly and noisy, there was no mistaking that. Brown-headed cowbirds lay their eggs in other birds' nests. These eggs and the resulting fledglings are imposters or counterfeits and the poor unsuspecting mother bird, which the cowbird takes advantage of, never seems to catch on. It raises the cowbird as though it was its own, as though it is working hard to maintain its own species. And in the case of the tiny junko, that amounted to a whole lot of work for nothing.

I sat and watched the imposter for a while and wished I had brought my cat. The young cowbird was so loud and demanding and the poor little junko was so quiet and accommodating. You could tell the little junko was getting run off her feet and stressed right out by the imposter. You could sense the entrapment. Finally she flew away and the immature cowbird went squawking right after her in hot pursuit.

As the two of them left, I got to thinking about imposters. I thought about how they often give nothing and take everything. I thought about how they often take advantage of the unsuspecting and innocent. I thought about how they can wreak havoc and entrap. I guess imposters in every sphere of my life have duped me at least once but the worst imposters of all seem to show up in the spiritual realm.

When I was at a time where I had really come to the end of myself, I began a spiritual search, at least that is what I called it, for something that would bring some peace to me, any peace. I tried booze, prescription drugs and several different religions pretty much all at the same time. I thought I was making some pretty good progress with my spiritual smorgasbord until one night Linda came out of the bedroom where she had been peacefully sleeping and found me on the living room sofa. I had

my short fat legs crossed in as near to a full lotus position as I could muster, thumb touching middle finger on one hand, a beer clutched in the other, and a pill bottle full of tranquilizers on the coffee table. I was really concentrating, trying to muster the most impressive bass "ooooooooommm" that I could rally, one that would really set my brain to vibrating. My young Christian wife took one tired look at the pagan spectacle before her, laughed and returned to the bedroom. I knew right then things were not going too well. I knew right then that imposters were duping me. I knew my young Christian wife to be very spiritually perceptive.

Satan is the greatest imposter and deceiver that operates in the spiritual realm. He deceitfully offers life and liberty but comes to steal away life and entrap. And often he does not work alone. The Apostle Paul wrote in the Bible, "Satan changes himself to look like an angel of light. So it does not surprise us if Satan's servants also make themselves look like servants who work for what is right." (2 Cor. 11:14-15)

Today we have the great imposter and many of his servants promising to deliver all kinds of spiritual goods, promising a way to God. Today we have many unsuspecting people hungering for spiritual things, hungering for a relationship with God and the peace only God can give. Sociologists tell us that more people today are more hungry spiritually than perhaps at any other time in the history of North America. These hungry ones often make willing targets for the great imposter and his agents. But the truth is, the cold hard politically incorrect truth is, that there is only one true and living God and only one who can make Him known (John 1:18). He is the one who says, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

As Christians, we have good news and bad news to announce to a spiritually hungry world. The bad news is that there is an imposter, one who can use many agents to lead a person down the garden path, one that will promise much and deliver little. Beware of the imposter. The good news is the person of Jesus Christ who said, "I am the

way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) The imposter will entrap with false promises of peace, spiritual truth, divine access and abundant living through all kinds of abstract spirituality. Only the person of Jesus Christ will deliver the goods. Only Jesus Christ guarantees his faithful: “And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:32)

Sometimes we humans make the imposters work so easy for him. The imposter is extremely tricky and will often disguise himself well. And we sometimes get so thirsty for spiritual things that we get demanding, let alone unsuspecting. Like the man in the old story that follows:

At Park Rapids, Minnesota, a tramp walked into a restaurant and asked the proprietor for a free meal. The hobo looked so hungry and bedraggled that the sympathetic restaurant man said, “Ok, what’ll yuh have?”

The tramp sat down at a table and had a good meal, a first-class handout.

As the hobo was leaving, he walked up to the proprietor and even bummed a cigarette. He fished in a pocket for a match and along with the match he carelessly pulled out a 20 dollar bill.

“Say, what’s that,” shouted the proprietor. “You come in here bumming a meal, and you’ve got 20 bucks.” And he grabbed the banknote.

“But this was supposed to be a free meal,” the hobo protested.

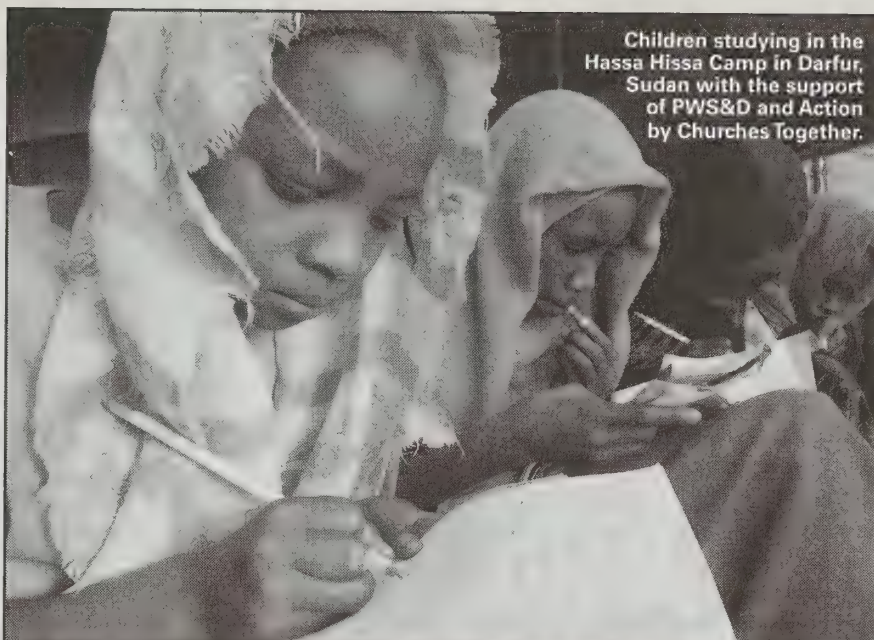
“Not on your life,” said the restaurant man. “I’ll just take 35 cents out of this 20.”

“Just remember, buddy,” said the tramp. “I don’t want you to do this; I’m not asking you.”

“Is zat so,” responded the restaurant man, and he handed the hobo \$19.65 in change.

The unhappy ending of the story is that when the proprietor took the money to the bank he found that the \$20 bill he had taken from the hobo was counterfeit. *✂*

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry and the author of *From Under a Blazing Aspen*, *And the Aspens Whisper* and the recently published *Like a Winter’s Aspen: Embracing the Creator’s Fire*.



Children studying in the Hassa Hissa Camp in Darfur, Sudan with the support of PWS&D and Action by Churches Together.

## *“I want to be a teacher.”*

In the camps for internally displaced people in Darfur, Sudan, hope is often in very short supply. Yet in the Hassa Hissa camp — a tough, blighted, almost irredeemably harsh place — it is hard to miss the hope coming from the enthusiastic students in the schools run by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), a partner of Action by Churches Together (ACT).

With support from ACT members like PWS&D, SCC has built basic shelters for two schools from grade one to eight, housing over 2700 students and 57 teachers. Each student has been given one exercise book, pencils, an eraser and a ruler. The children share the few textbooks.

Many of the students have lost family members and friends in the last year of violence. Here, both the traumatized student and the traumatized society find hope. “I would like to become a teacher. Anyone who grows up to become something like a doctor is because of a teacher. It is an important job,” says one young girl.

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# A united effort crowns righteousness

*Diverse Toronto recognizes it is more alike than different*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

As one of the church's largest and richest presbyteries, East Toronto occupies an interesting spot on the landscape. Even though it was only created in 1949 (when the Presbytery of Toronto was divided into east and west), its history includes some of the oldest churches of the denomination in Canada. Despite its fabled past, the presbytery is in the midst of change. Encompassing a downtown portion of the city as well as its northern and eastern outskirts, the demographics of East Toronto aren't quite what they once were. Originally a destination for immigrants from the United Kingdom, the bustling city has grown to include immigrants from non-European countries, changing the community's makeup as well as the people in the pews. Toronto is the most multicultural city in Canada and the presbytery's 25 congregations reflect that fact.

East Toronto includes five ethnic congregations — two Chinese, one Mandarin, one Formosan and one Taiwanese. (Geographically speaking, there are also several Korean congrega-

**'In worshipping together, we will be reminded that in spite of having taken divergent paths, we are truly more alike than we are different, and that unites us more than divides us'**

tions in the area, but formally they belong to the Western Han-Ca Presbytery.) Chinese, Toronto, holds English and Chinese services with music in both languages, and two Sunday schools. It also offers a long list of fellowship programs for all ages and stages of life, including a sports group and a drama group called ACTS — Acclaiming Christ Through Stage, that performs in the church and in the community.

It was through the vision of Thomas Eng, minister at Chinese, Toronto, that Celebration North was born. Celebration has a large Asian contingent, but is English-speaking. Although they don't have their own building, the church's minister, Peter Ma, has led the congregation of about 75 adults since its inception in 1996. Ma is devoted to reaching those who do not go to church. He proclaims that attendants need not worry about violating protocol. "We assume very little background

in knowledge of the Bible and faith matters, and we try to make it a service that is approachable, honest, sincere and authentic," said Ma. "We're more informal than formal, and we offer contemporary worship." Small groups for married people, singles, young couples, women, and families are offered, as is an ESL class.

Ma said although the church's niche is Asian ministry he would one day like to attract other ethnic groups. "It doesn't matter what kind of congregation we become ethnically," he said, "but that the cultural barriers are bridged and obstacles are taken away so people can come and worship." Ma said congregation members have to be culturally sensitive to everyone, by minimizing inside jokes and not speaking in other languages without explaining to others.

Gateway Community Church is one congregation that does this well. It has almost always included a significant mix of cultures. Its worship services are tailored to appeal to the diverse backgrounds and denominations represented there. Since its beginning, the congregation has focused on outreach to the community, with a variety of groups using the church for special events.

Glebe supports communities in other countries by selling fair trade coffee. The church doesn't make any profit from the sales, but uses it to raise awareness of the need to pay coffee farmers a fair wage for their product. Fair trade coffee helps support the wider community where plantations are located, as portions of the profits are reinvested in community programs and infrastructure.

Knox, Spadina, established in 1820, offers weekly ESL classes and dinners, and multi-language Bible studies. They're currently trying to install an



One of the Tuesday Morning Community Breakfast teams at St. Andrew's Out of the Cold program.

PHOTO: WENDY PEARSON



**Yonge Street Shares: Great food, great cause, great fundraiser. Great mission work.**



elevator for greater accessibility. The current building was built in 1909, but when the first church was built, Toronto (then called York) was a town of only 1,200. Knox' current multicultural location can't erase its rich, Scottish history, beginning with its minister in 1945, Robert Burns. Burns brought a passion for evangelism and mission and was instrumental in the formation of several churches in the Maritimes and Western Ontario. Along with good friends (and good journalists) Peter and George Brown (a Father of Confederation), they created the *Banner*, a paper to support the Free Church in Scotland. The publication later became the present-day *Presbyterian Record*. Burns' successor, Alexander Topp, had a hand in stationing George Leslie Mackay, one of the first ever missionaries to Taiwan. Topp was also instrumental in uniting all Presbyterian congregations under the PCC in 1875.

The presbytery is also ministering to groups who are marginalized because of poverty, various disabilities, or sexual orientation. Many of the presbytery's congregations support

Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission providing food and shelter to the city's homeless. The presbytery also runs several Out of the Cold programs. Known as "the church with a heart in the heart of Toronto," St. Andrew's, King Street, was one of the first Toronto congregations to operate this program, led by congregation member and journalist Stevie Cameron. Out of the Cold offers warm meals, and sometimes a warm bed, during the winter months to those who have nowhere else to go. The initiative at St. Andrew's has been so successful that it is often used as a model and training centre for other congregations wanting to develop their own homelessness projects. St. Andrew's is one of the oldest Presbyterian congregations in Toronto, established in 1830. St. Andrew's associate minister, Rodger Hunter, is director of Boarding Homes Ministry, where volunteers visit boarding homes around the city, providing fellowship, friendship and ministry. It is a project supported by several congregations.

Glenview, established in 1925, held its first services in a theatre and now has

a building that seats 650 people. Glenview's written history refers to the first sermon given by Rev. H.E. Abraham, during which he said, "No Christian heart can by itself do Christian work. Should righteousness be crowned, it calls forth a united effort." The congregation presently supports Evangel Hall, Portland Place, Out of the Cold, Armagh, Backdoor Ministry and Boarding Homes Ministry. They also hold an annual event called Yonge Street Shares, where about a dozen of the top restaurants in the city serve samples of their food at the church. Held in June, the congregation raised \$18,000 this year to support these ministries.

Rosedale was built on mission involvement. One year prior to having its own building in 1909, the congregation responded to an urgent appeal for \$3,000 to build a church in China. Its commitment to outreach hasn't stopped since. It supports many of the programs listed above and also partners with a rural congregation. Rosedale provides the funds to plant and harvest grain for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. And in an effort to respond to



the controversies and tensions among the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths, Rosedale is holding a lecture series on fundamentalism, with speakers from these three traditions.

Calvin Church, which celebrated its 80th anniversary on June 12, holds regular community breakfasts, operates a food bank and opens its doors to the community on weekdays for those seeking a quiet place for prayer and reflection. And, in a spirit of unity, Calvin shares worship services during the summer with nearby Deer Park United — the very congregation that was created when deflecting Presbyterians left for the United Church in 1925. In the church's newsletter, Calvin's minister, Ian McDonald, reflected on this practice. "In worshipping together, we will be reminded that in spite of having taken divergent paths, we are truly more alike than we are different, and that unites us more than divides us."

For Your Inspiration — fyi — is a downtown mission project of the presbytery, ministering to people who feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in traditional church settings.

A hot seat for controversial debate, the presbytery is engaged in wrestling with ways to appropriately and faithfully respond to its diverse community. East Toronto has raised the same-sex marriage issue — both within presbytery and to the General Assembly. Its most recent question — presented in Edmonton at this year's assembly, was prompted by fyi's Jane Swatridge, who needed guidance when asked to marry a gay couple. General Assembly reaffirmed its position that marriage is between one man and one woman, and ministers are therefore not permitted to officiate over other types of unions. (See the July/August issue for full coverage.)

East Toronto has accepted the challenge of ministering to an increasingly wide array of cultures, traditions and social groups by widening its arms to welcome all. "Making small changes in the right area can make a big difference," said Ma. "They don't have to be huge, but if they're in the right place, they can have a big impact." ☞

## vacancies

### Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

New Church Development positions available through Canada Ministries; Contact Rev. Gordon Haynes, Associate Secretary; 416-441-1111 extension 258 for more details.

#### Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Charlottetown, PEI; Zion Church; Rev. Paula Hamilton, 19 Tamarac Ave., Charlottetown, PEI C1A 6T2; 902-626-3268; hamilton@isn.net.  
Chatham (Miramichi), NB; Calvin; Black River Bridge, St. Paul's; Kouchibouguac, Knox. Rev. J. Gillis Smith, 535 King George Hwy., (Newcastle) Miramichi, NB E1V 1N2; 506-622-5441; rachmsmi@nbnet.nb.ca.  
Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, NB; St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanness@hotmail.com.  
Tatamagouche Pastoral Charge: Sedgwick Memorial, Tatamagouche, St. Matthew's, Wallace and St. John's, Pugwash; Interim-moderator Richard E. Sand, 37 Mountain Rd., New Glasgow, NS B2H 3K7; acersand@ns.sympatico.ca.  
Thornburn and Sutherland's River, NS; Union; Interim Moderator Rev. E. M. Iona MacLean, PO Box 1003, Pictou, NS B0K 1H0; ionamac@eastlink.ca.  
Woodstock, St. Paul's New Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Adams, 1991 Hwy. 640, Hanwell, NB E3C 1Z5

#### Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Inverness, co-operative with the United Church, 3-point charge; Rev. J. B. Forsyth, 585 Principale sud, Waterville, QC J0B 3H0; 819-837-1475; jbfors@netrevolution.com.  
Montreal, Chinese; Rev. J.S.S. Armour, 101 Creswell Dr., Beaconsfield, QC H9W 1E1; 514-426-4688; jss@magma.ca.  
Montreal, Taiwanese Robert Campbell Memorial; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lac Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklempe@po-box.mcgill.ca.  
Montreal, Town of Mount Royal; Rev. John Vaudry; 5723 Wentworth Ave., Cote St-Luc, QC H4W 2S2; 514-738-6115; john.vaudry@3web.net.  
Ottawa, St. Giles; Rev. Andrew Johnston, Interim Moderator; St. Andrew's, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; aj@standrewsottawa.ca.  
Pincourt, QC, Ile Perrot; David Morris, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4378; dafydd.rich@sympatico.ca.  
Vankleek Hill, Knox; Hawkesbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Ian MacMillan, RR 2, Cornwall, ON K6H 5R6; 613-931-2545; a3100@glen-net.ca.

Westport, Knox; Rev. Marilyn Savage; 24 North St., Perth, ON K7H 2S5; 613-267-4213; marilysavage@canada.com.

#### Synod of Toronto and Kingston

Belleville, St. Columbia; Rev. Katherine McCloskey, PO Box 118, Stirling, ON K0K 3E0; 613-395-5006; katherinejonah@hotmail.com.  
Campbellford, St. Andrew's; Burnbrae, St. Andrew's; Rev. Roger Millar, PO Box 327, Norwood, ON K0L 2V0; 705-639-5846; rnmillar@personainternet.com.  
Gananoque, St. Andrew's; The Rev. Lincoln Bryant, Interim Moderator; 130 Clergy St. E., Kingston, ON K7K 3S3; 613-546-6316; servant@kos.net.  
Kirkfield, St. Andrew's; Bolsover, St. Andrew's; Woodville, Woodville Community Presbyterian; Rev. Barney Grace, PO Box 465, Beaverton, ON L0K 1A0; 505-426-9475; kbwchargeoffice@sympatico.ca.  
Kitchener, St. Andrew's; Rev. Dr. Aubrey Botha, 7 Queens Square, Cambridge, ON N1S 1H4; 519-623-1080; aubreycentral@bellnet.ca.  
North Bay, Calvin; Rev. Wallace Little, PO Box 983, Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0; 705-384-5453; awlittles@sympatico.ca. (effective July 31, 2005)  
Palmerston, Knox; Drayton, Knox; Rev. Dr. Brice L. Martin, 190 Tucker St., PO Box 159, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0; bricelmartin@yahoo.com.  
Stayner, Jubilee; Sunnidale Corners, Zion; Rev. Keith Boyer; 27 Laurie Cres., Barrie, ON L4M 6C7; 705-735-9211; keb-cvb@sympatico.ca.  
Thornton, Ivy; half time pastor (3-yr. Canada Ministries appointment); Patrick Voo; 110 Line 7 South, PO Box 8, Oro, ON L0L 2X0; 705-487-1998; pvoo@trinitycommunity.org.  
Toronto, Patterson; Rev. Zoltan Vass, 439 Vaughan Rd, Toronto, ON M6C 2P1; 416-656-1342  
Toronto, Runnymede; Rev. William Adamson, 680 Annette St., Toronto, ON M6S 2C3; bandbadamson@sympatico.ca  
Toronto, St. Andrew's, Humber Heights; Rev. Garth Wilson, 155 Wychwood Ave., Toronto, ON M6C 2T1.  
Toronto, University Church; Rev. Bryn MacPhail, 15 Lambeth Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9A 2Y6; bryn@reformedtheology.ca.  
Uxbridge, St. Andrew's-Chalmers; Rev. Duncan Cameron; 115 St. Andrews Rd, Scarborough, ON M1P 4N2; 416-438-4370; scarboroughpc@allstream.net.  
Warkworth, St. Andrew's; Hastings, St. Andrew's; Rev. Rylan Montgomery, PO Box 328, Colborne, ON K0K 1S0; 613-475-4675; rylan.montgomery@gmail.ca.

Vacancies continued on page 48

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Applications or enquiries to Dr Francis Macnab  
[office@stmichaels.org.au](mailto:office@stmichaels.org.au)

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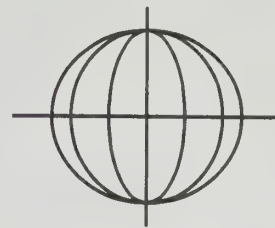
Interim Moderator

165 Charlton Avenue W.

Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8

(905) 549 8053

[hjbradley@mountaincable.net](mailto:hjbradley@mountaincable.net)



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The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency and Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) Committee is inviting applications for the executive position of Director, PWS&D at Church Offices in Toronto.

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Starting Date is  
March 15th, 2006 (negotiable)

The deadline for  
receiving applications is  
**WEDNESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 30TH, 2005**

Applications should be submitted to:

The Rev. Andrew Johnston

82 Kent St.

Ottawa ON K1P 5N9

Email: [aj@StAndrewsOttawa.ca](mailto:aj@StAndrewsOttawa.ca)



## Vacancies continued

Waterloo, Waterloo North; Rev. Calvin Brown; 5 Linda Dr., Cambridge, ON N3C 3W5; 519-651-2232; cbbrown@rogers.com.  
West Hill, Grace; Rev. Issa Saliba, 209 Cochrane St., Whitby, ON L1N 5H9; standrewschurch@bellnet.ca.

### Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Bayfield, Knox; new interim moderator The Rev. Henry Huberts, 59 Goderich St. W., Seaforth, ON N0K 1W0; pcip453@sympatico.ca.  
Brantford, Alexandra; Rev. John Cruickshank, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com.  
Chesley, Geneva Church; Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie, RR 3, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0; Phone: 519-363-5392; Fax: 519-363-0975  
Hamilton, Central; Full-time minister; The Rev. Harry J. Bradley, Interim Moderator, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-549-8053; hjbradley@mountaincable.net.  
Hamilton, Chalmers; Rev. Dr. Ron Archer; 31 Sulphur Springs Rd., Ancaster, ON L9G 1L7; 905-648-6024; standrew@interlynx.net.  
Hamilton, St. John & St. Andrew; Hamilton, St. David's; Rev. Clive W. Simpson, 19 Tisdale St. N., Hamilton, ON L8L 8A7; 905-709-6004; clive.simpson@sympatico.ca.  
London, Korean Christian; Mr. Sam Lim, 530 Topping Lane, London, ON N6J 3M7; Bus: 519-472-0360; Home: 519-681-3828 samlimca@yahoo.ca.  
Markdale, Cooke's; Feversham, Burns; Rev. Steve Webb; 136 Henry St., Meaford, ON N4L 1E2; 519-538-5095  
Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Interim Minister to begin April 2006; Rev. Terry Samuel, PO Box 587, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0; 519-542-2253; terry.samuel@sympatico.ca.  
Southampton, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Doug Lennox, PO Box B36, RR 1, Sauble Beach, ON N0H 2G0 dlennox@sympatico.ca.  
Tillsonburg, St. Andrew's; Rev. Ferenc Szatmari; 21 Lansdowne Ave, Delhi, ON N4B 3B6; 519-582-2169  
Windsor, Chinese Church; Half-time, Cantonese-speaking; Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland, Windsor, ON N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627; paulinmemorial@on.aibn.com.  
Wyoming-Camlachie, St. Andrew's, Wyoming, Knox, Camlachie; Rev. Margaret Wisner, PO Box 391, Courtright, ON N0N 1H0; 519-867-5562; wallace.mw@sympatico.ca.

### Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Thompson, St. Andrew's; Rev. Matthew Brough, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB, R1A 1N1; 204-482-6425; mcbrough@shaw.ca.

### Synod of Saskatchewan

Melfort, St. James; Tisdale, St. Andrew's; Rev. George Yando, 314-24th St. W, Prince Albert, SK S6V 4N1; 306-922-2718; geoyando@sasktel.net.  
Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.  
Synod of Alberta and the Northwest Medicine Hat, AB, Riverside; Rev. Dr. Bob Cruickshank, 504 2 St. SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0C6; 403-526-4542; st\_johns@telusplanet.net.  
Stony Plain, AB, Parkland First; New Church Development; Interim Moderator Rev. Glenn Ball, Sherwood Park Presbyterian Church, 265 Fir St., Sherwood Park, AB T8A 2G7; 780-464-2528; sherwoodparkpresby@shaw.ca.

### Synod of British Columbia

Maple Ridge, BC, Haney Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Crowell, Vancouver School of Theology, 6000 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 1L4; 604-822-0638; pcrowell@vst.edu.  
Prince George, BC, St. Giles Presbyterian Church (vacant June 1st); Interim Moderator John Wyming, RR 5, PO Box 6, Niyas Site, Quesnel, BC V2J 3H9; 250-249-9611; carpresb@uniserve.com.  
Richmond, BC, Richmond Presbyterian Church; Rev. R.C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Court, Mission, BC V4S 1B8; 604-462-0858; garvins@shaw.ca  
Victoria, BC, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca.

All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: \$10 for the basic notice and \$1 per word for additional information. (There is no charge for congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)

**Contact the *Record* office regarding items for this column.**

**If you would like to advertise a position available at your church in the *Record* please contact:**

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Fax: 905.833.2116  
E-mail: cmccormick@canadads.com

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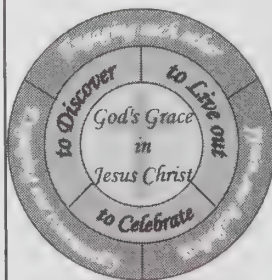
For further information, contact the interim moderator:

Rev. Andrew Johnston  
St. Andrew's Church  
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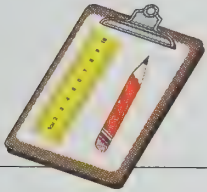
# called to wonder

Created by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
St. Mark's Church, Don Mills, Ont.



**BACK TO THE BASICS** It is the time of year to refresh our memories about what we have learned before and to learn new things. Let's practice using our brains by doing the puzzle below.

To solve the puzzle think of words that belong to the categories listed on the left side. Then choose appropriate words that begin with the letter listed at the top. For example, if the category were COLOURS and the letters listed across the top were R, O, B, P, and G, your answers might be red, orange, blue, pink, and green. Do you get the idea? Go ahead and think of one word beginning with L, J, P, G, and H for each category. The last two categories are more difficult.



A to Z

**THINK ABOUT IT!**

A to Z

|   | L | J | P | G | H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>1. Fruits of the Spirit</b><br>(Good News translation) |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>2. Books of the Old Testament</b>                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>3. Books of the New Testament</b>                      |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | L | P | G | H |   |
| <b>4. Titles for Christ</b><br>(could be a phrase)        |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | L | P | G | S |   |
| <b>5. The parable of the...</b><br>(could be a phrase)    |   |   |   |   |   |

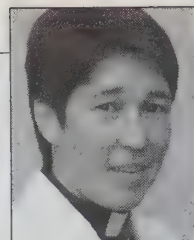
**Refer to your Bible if you need to, and have fun!**

(1. – Galatians 5: 22-23) (2. and 3. – index at the front of your Bible) (4. – John 1: 29 or John 9: 5; Acts 3: 22; John 10: 11 or Hebrews 13: 20; Hebrews 3: 1 or Mark 1: 24) (5. – Matthew 20: 1-16 or Matthew 5: 14-15 or Luke 13: 20-21 or Luke 15: 8-10 or Matthew 18: 12-14; Matthew 13: 45-46 or Luke 18: 2-8 or Luke 18: 10-14 or Luke 15: 11-32; Luke 10: 30-37 or Mark 4: 26-29; Luke 14: 34-35 or Luke 14: 7-14 or Matthew 25: 31-46 or Luke 8: 5-15)

To learn more about God's messages, go online at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca/wonder](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca/wonder)

Answers on page 47





# Are we we are

**A**re we we are. These words are part of the refrain from the song "Are We The Waiting" recorded by the popular band Green Day. The CD notes want listeners to know the song was written on Easter Sunday.

The words "Are we we are" may be grammatically awkward, but they reflect a tension that was expressed by the young Presbyterians I consulted in preparation for this article.

Are we we are — expresses question and affirmation together.

Are we we are — holds the tension of perplexity and proclamation.

I asked my consultants a quick, two-part question that I hoped would prompt some honest responses, "In your experience and understanding, what's right with the church and what's wrong with the church?" Their reactions were surprisingly consistent.

What's wrong? Not enough diversity of people; youth group has too many games and superficial stuff and not enough meaning; we know the children's story is for the little kids but it's the thing we relate to most; not sure where we fit in; there is a reluctance to deal with issues relevant to youth.

What's right? Communion — because it's sacred; emphasis on mission; older people are supportive of youth initiatives; when ministers don't just tell the same bible story the same way but they take a different angle on it; church is a place to learn about faith because we go to public school; people know me and love me there; even if they don't know me they welcome me; everybody believes in Jesus Christ.

The comments enlightened me to some things I needed to hear and

raised insights about belonging, and a desire for depth.

There is a sense of belonging to a faith community where youth are recognized, respected and valued. **We are** known and welcomed is the affirmation. However, often in worship and programming they fill in a forgotten void between the majority who are older adults, and the children. In what

church in the world, in our relationships with family and friends. These things of God we know to be true are very important for us to remember. **We are** God's people. **We are** wonderfully and beautifully made. **We are** loved and able to love others. **We are** called to acts of compassion and justice. **We are** part of the church of Jesus Christ.

**Are we finding openness to our questions of faith?  
Are we encouraged to dig deep and grow in our understanding  
of who God is in our lives and in the lives of others? Are we  
just here to play games and be entertained?**

ways **are we** really part of this community?

**Are we** finding openness to our questions of faith? **Are we** encouraged to dig deep and grow in our understanding of who God is in our lives and in the lives of others? **Are we** just here to play games and be entertained? **We are** moved by the sacred acts and symbols of Christian faith. **We are** disciples of Jesus. **We are** responsive to challenging and interesting preaching. **We are** appreciative of other ages and stages who also seek depth of meaning in their religious experience.

**Are we we are** — invites both questions and certainties. Our questions, and even our doubts, are important components of a living, growing spirituality. As well as posing our questions it is vital for us to call to mind and heart the convictions we hold. It's the **we are** part of the refrain. The affirmations of our faith come to us in scripture, in our experience of the work and life of the

**Are we we are.** The song holds the tension of question and proclamation. So does a living faith. The song was written on Easter Sunday. For us, younger and older, that day holds the promise that despite our questions, God breaks through with certainty that, in the words of another song, "**We are** God's people of which the Lord is head, called to obey him, now risen from the dead; he wills us be one family, diverse yet truly one: oh let us freely give our gifts, and so shall God's work on earth be done."

Peace,

*Jean Morris*





## Can you see the church?

So, there I was in the Superstore on a Friday night after the closing of the Bible School you called it the Summer Church Camp 2005!! being asked a simple yet profound question by the cashier: "Are you building the church yet?" And without missing a beat, I smiled and said, "No, we are building it - one person at a time. Thanks for asking!"

And that is exactly what we are doing, building this Christian community one person at a time, day by day. Sunday by Sunday, event by event, visit by visit, through our worship, our programs, our publicity and through our people as they invite others to become part of... to become part of what we've become in the years ahead.

The Presbytery of Halifax-Cumberland decided a few years earlier that the rapidly growing area of Halifax West would be fertile ground for a new church development. Commitment were made and plans were made and land was purchased and...

There it sat! That's the church we are building.

"The church is not a building! The church is not a steeple! The church is not a meeting place! The church is a people! I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we are the church together!" (Book of Prayer #474)

- Rev. Kenneth Sinclair





**Bullying  
happens.  
Even in  
our churches.  
Let's work as a  
community to  
eliminate bullying.**

**“Blessed are the peacemakers...”**

(Mt. 5:9)

**Education for the Faith,  
Ministry with Children and Youth  
and their Families  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada**



# PRESBYTERIAN Record

October 2005

## THE TRAVEL ISSUE

Where Jesus was born

Where Jesus slept

The Holy City  
and the wall

Caucasian Orthodoxy

Praying in a  
Mayan village



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**The best contributions will be published.**

**And one church will get selected for one year's worth  
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**Deadline extended until December 31, 2005**

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PRESBYTERIAN  
Record





# The fragility of civility

Almost every schoolchild reads *Lord of the Flies*, but as hurricane Katrina proved a few weeks ago, it takes little to turn novelist's dystopias into tragic reality. From Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* to José Saramago's *Blindness*; the writer's imagination is little exaggeration on reality. • Curiously, the illness that overturns world order in Saramago's novel is a "white blindness." In the case of New Orleans, it's difficult not to

assess the post-storm debacle as a serious case of "black blindness": the vast majority of those affected by the storm being black (and poor), an indictment of a nation's insistent blindness to the racism that shackles its black population.

It is deeply, deeply troubling from a personal and global human perspective that blacks, who comprise about 13 per cent of the U.S. population, are so disproportionately represented in the poorest class. But in Canada, we need to solve our own aboriginal issue before dispensing advice to others. As serious as racism and poverty are in the world's richest nation, that is an issue Americans must struggle with.

Many commentators were quick to jump on the anti-Bush bandwagon. Canadians scolding the U.S. president on a domestic issue is little more than anti-Americanism. There is a clear warning in scripture about pointing out specks in another's eye while blinded by log-jams in one's own.

In fact, while we have made different choices about both government and, relatedly, how we spread our collective wealth among citizens, the poverty rate is an unacceptable 12 per cent in both Canada and the United States. The CIA lists Croatia, China, Mauritius, Ireland, France, Belgium and Taiwan as among the 13 countries with a lower poverty percentage.

What Katrina revealed is that our civility — our forms of government, criminal and civil courts, educational facilities, banks and other commercial institutions — our entire infrastructure as a nation can collapse as fast as earthen levees breached by a storm surge. No nation, however wealthy, can afford to be smug about how easily social order breaks down in the face of massive disasters.

If oil-rich Texas is feeling swamped with refugees, we ought all to reflect on how immeasurably more burdensome the refugee crises in Sudan, Congo and other similar countries must be, where there is no National Guard to arrive — even a few days later than expected — with food, water, medicine and shelter.

Nor are we in a position to shame the looters. It may be that

easier access to more guns exacerbated the situation, but psychologists have studied our individual and collective behaviour enough to show that theft and violence will break out sooner or later among humans in the midst of any similar trauma, whether people are educated or illiterate, rich or dirt-poor.

But if the fallout from Katrina revealed the fragility of our civility, surely the test now for us who are physically removed from the situation is how we respond — not merely in our tangible charity to those who have suffered loss — but in our attitudes towards all those rogue elements that drowned the city as quickly as the waters.

As people of faith, we need to address poverty and prejudice in our communities. We need continually to be looking for ways to help the marginalized both as individuals and as part of the institutional church: some people are only able to write a cheque, but it's also easy to hide behind cheques.

Jesus and the prophets call us again and again to address injustice in the world and to build community. Caring for our neighbour means giving something of oneself. That and the faith that underlies our actions are about all that separate us from the dissolution of community into free-for-all chaos. If we can learn that, the misery of New Orleans will have produced some good.

\*\*\*

In this issue you will find a letter from me asking you to support the *Presbyterian Record* with a tax-deductible donation. It's one of those inexorable facts of life that costs, including those of publishing this magazine, keep increasing. We believe — and we hope you do too — that the *Record* is one of the most important symbols of the church in Canada, although we are not funded by the church. Please read the enclosed information and consider carefully if you can make a donation to this important ministry.

Thank you.

David Harris





Cynthia Carter at Francisco Coll School, in the municipal district of Guatemala City.

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**On the cover:** A Christian presence in Jerusalem, the Church of the Sisters of Sion as seen from the Via Dolorosa. Photo by Sandra Demson.

## Too kind, but nice to hear

I freely admit to having only recently paid attention to the total content of the *Record*. The magazine has arrived at our home for the last five years, yet I only started thoroughly reading and thinking about some of the articles in the past little while, dating I think to a visit one Sunday morning from Rick Fee in his position as Moderator (good for him to visit our church; great visit and a great guy!).

I've enjoyed many articles in the 2005 issues, some by your regular contributors, others by authors whose names I've seen only once. While divergent in content and length and variable in message and style, all provide thoughtful commentary on the issues presented. It would be an interesting exercise for congregations to identify categories of Christian principles and then to seek articles in past issues of the *Record* for discussion. One wonders what action(s) might fall out into the congregation and the community from such an exercise. Certainly the diversity of article type is there, and I compliment the editorial staff for their wisdom (and perhaps courage!) in presenting ideas for us all to think about (even with the occasional disclaimer at the bottom of a page!).

I hesitate to pick out a particular contributor but simply say a personal thank you to Andrew Faiz for the thoughts and ideas in his regular column Pop Christianity. He offers many gems of thoughtful analysis about cur-

rent practices of advocates within the Christian religion in North America. He writes that "church isn't about tradition, it's about mission" (May), he comments on a recent book by a "conservative author (that) huffs and puffs without mentioning Christ" (January), he challenges mainline churches and laments the absence of youth by suggesting that "many possible congregants are lost, usually in the teen years, because of the tone and style of the traditional service" (April), he speaks of personal anguish during the loss of his father to a form of Parkinson's disease and so perhaps gives comfort to those experiencing similar trauma (June), and he writes of "how religion is misused over and over to promote intolerance over inclusion" (March). I expect there will be letters to the editor about his comment (July/August) that "we stay (in church) because our fellows in the pews become our family; and Sunday service is merely the dysfunctional weekly gathering of the clan. The sermon, the price we pay for coffee hour." But it is an interesting comment!

It is a credit to our denomination and to the editors of the *Record* that we all have the freedom to write, to read, to think and perhaps to begin to revise our ways of doing things so that the thoughtfulness of our worship can be deepened and strengthened. Columns by Andrew Faiz and others in the *Record* contribute to that hope.

Ralph D. Morris  
Fenwick, Ont.

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*Letters continued*

## Pop grammar

I hear language is a living thing. In retirement, I have not been studying the evolution of our language as much as I should. Hence, I am probably exposing my obsolescence and ignorance of current trends when I ask for your observations on two grammatical points in the May *Record*.

In the Pop Christianity column, the paragraph beginning “thinks of the haggard shoppers...” I am wondering about the use of “I” in the phrase “with you and I.” In the next sentence I see “if there was a place...” Is “was” as correct as “were” in this subjunctive phrase?

I am stimulating my own thinking in this question as much as I am trying to get your response.

*Aubrey Barfoot*

*via email*

passed a law abolishing slavery in the British Empire, which obviously included the colonies of British North America from which Canada was formed. A sum of £20M was provided to compensate the slave-owners. Slaves were to be free after a period of apprenticeship. But the apprenticeship system proved so unfair and unmanageable that slavery was ended completely in 1838, two years before the apprenticeship period was to end.

*Garnet G. Trivett*

*Simcoe, Ont.*

---

*Editor responds:* 1883 was a typo, it should have read 1838.

## Mark 12: 41- 44

Toronto's Trinity, York Mills, is located near a busy intersection. One result of this is the frequent, often unusual visitors who drop in during the week for myriad of reasons. What just might be the most unusual, to date, occurred late one morning, in early August.

There were two women, both somewhere between their late 30's or early 40's. One spoke no English and was visiting Canada. The other was an immigrant who spoke English fairly well. Both were Iraqi Muslims. The one with no English, using her friend as interpreter, said she wanted to make a donation to our church. When queried on her reasons, she said it was her belief that the God of the Christians is the same God as that of the Muslims. Also, she was heartsick over the animosities between the two religions, especially in her homeland. Something within her moved her spirit to tangibly acknowledge her belief — hence the donation.

Neither woman seemed especially wealthy. Neither wanted to say anything else about themselves, though there were probably volumes to be spoken, given their philosophy and the nature of things at home. Both appeared to value their anonymity and, having conferred mutual blessings on each other, they departed. The donation was \$5, but the unknown avenues through which it came to Trinity must

---

*Editor responds:* Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, 2nd Edition, 1965, states, “‘You and I’ is a piece of false grammar which, though often heard, is not sanctioned. But it has distinguished ancestry. Shakespeare wrote...”

According to the *Canadian Press Stylebook*, ‘was’ is “simple past tense” but ‘were’ is to be used “when expressing a wish or a condition contrary to fact.”

## The end of slavery

In the February *Record*, Celebrating Black History Month stated that slavery was abolished in Canada in 1883. I thought surely that was a misprint. But in the next sentence it stated that slavery was abolished in Upper Canada (Ontario) 90 years earlier.

Indeed, in 1793 Lieutenant Governor Simcoe had the legislature pass a law stating that slave children would be free on reaching the age of 25. It did not abolish slavery immediately, but it dealt it a deathblow.

Courts in Lower Canada (Quebec) refused to recognize the ownership of slaves. Nova Scotia Courts said slavery did not exist there. In P.E.I., New Brunswick and Newfoundland the situation was similar.

Then in 1833 the British parliament

Canada

Magazines  
Canada

certainly make it equal to a King's ransom!

Perhaps, in these times of terror-stricken violence, with mutual fear and distrust between Christians, Muslims and Jews, we Presbyterians might consider taking a lesson from that anonymous visitor. Perhaps not to make donations but to find out more about Islam and Judaism.

Did not the Psalmist write, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem? "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers." (Ps. 122: 6-7) As all three religions also place value on the city of Jerusalem, could it be that, if the attitude and belief that brought about this donation were allowed to spread, might it not become the King's ransom through which peace is created?

Colin Campbell  
Toronto

### Measuring the stick

I read with both interest and concern the two letters in the July/August Record written in response to the review of Tom Harpur's *The Pagan Christ*.

Mr. Neal's letter begins by suggesting that, while some people believe too much, others believe too little. What he fails to do is provide us with any suggestion as to how much we really ought to believe. Unfortunately, most of us assume that people ought to believe about as much as we do. Those who believe more than we do we see as fundamentalists; those who believe less, as liberals. We set ourselves up as the canon or measuring stick for how much

faith is enough. That's why we, as a denomination, continue to place the measuring stick in Scripture.

Mr. Sutherland's letter indicates that Harpur's book and others like it promise to be "a primary influence for the future of Christianity." He also indicates his acceptance of the thesis that Jesus himself never lived and that the truth of early Christianity has been distorted over the years (presumably by those who turned Jesus into a real person).

I won't take the time to refute Harpur's so-called scholarship when that has been done so capably by others. What I would like to do is share some thoughts on Harpur's major thesis — that biblical Christianity is shown to be a hoax by the parallels that exist in other religions. The thoughts, interestingly, come from works written 60 years ago by one who knew how to argue for *Mere Christianity*.

"Those who do not know that this great myth became Fact when the Virgin conceived are, indeed, to be pitied. We must not be nervous about 'parallels' and 'Pagan Christs': they ought to be there — it would be a stumbling block if they weren't. On the contrary, I could not believe Christianity if I were forced to say that there were a thousand religions in the world of which 999 were pure nonsense and the thousandth (fortunately) true. My conversion, very largely, depended on recognizing Christianity as the completion, the actualization, the entelechy, of something that had never been wholly absent from the mind of man. And I still think that the agnostic argument from similarities be-

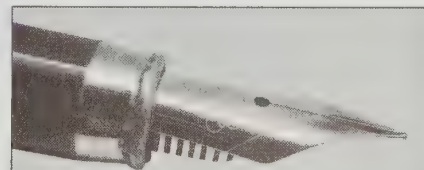
tween Christianity and paganism works only if you know the answer. If you start by knowing on other grounds that Christianity is false, then the pagan stories may be another nail in the coffin... But if the truth or falsehood of Christianity is the very question you are discussing, then the argument from anthropology is surely a *petitio*." (C.S. Lewis)

C. Duncan Cameron  
Scarborough, Ont.

### Corrections

*Montreal Reconfigures*, September  
First Presbyterian Church Verdun donated \$450,000 to the Presbytery of Montreal in May. Our story implied the donation was yet to be made. We regret the misunderstanding.

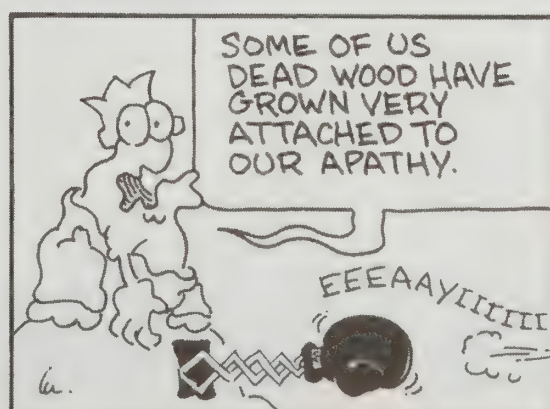
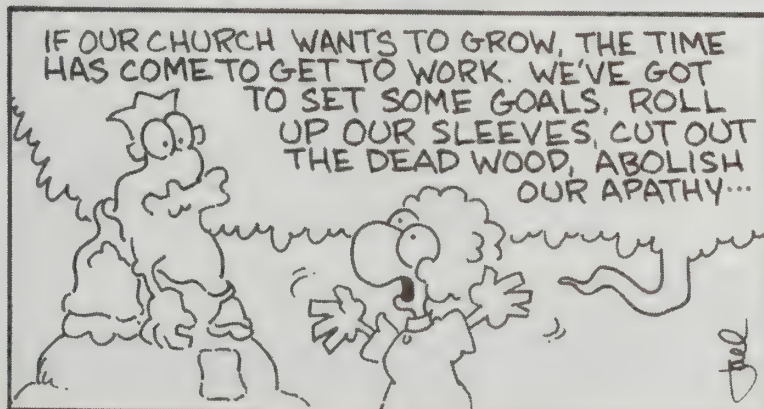
*A Kanata Presbyterian Buzzes in U.S. Spelling Bee*, July/August  
Parkwood Church is in Ottawa, not Kanata, Ont., as reported. We apologize for the mistake.



The *Presbyterian Record* welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

[letters@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:letters@presbyterianrecord.ca)

## Pontius' Puddle







The Mocha Mission Contest is possibly the first such challenge issued by this magazine since its inception in 1876. Not surprising then that our readers have been slow to embrace it. We have had several inquiries but no congregation has entered into the draw to get free Fair Trade coffee for a year.

Perhaps the prize wasn't big enough; or the committees have been slow in responding to session. Perhaps the readers are still shocked the magazine would issue a contest. We can only speculate.

But two individuals have taken initiative on behalf of their congregations: Barbara J. Ormston (above) made this wonderful quilt that tells the story of the "chain of economic slavery which exists in the absence of Fair Trade." She is a member of St. Paul's, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

Mary A. Johnston (right) has been "a volunteer entrepreneur, bookkeeper and delivery person," selling Fair Trade products to various retail outlets. Her church, St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont., "supports Fair Trade products as a tool to raise awareness of North/South inequities, challenge economic assumptions and provide top grade products."

The challenge to trade fair is open to every congregation.



**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.





Many hands make happy work. Or so it seems at Calvin, Toronto. The church was given an incomplete piece of needlework, but then this group of ladies got together. Along the way new friendships were forged through many laughs over the course of a year. They finished the project in March.

Catriona Dunlop was Clerk of Session for St. John's, Medicine Hat, Alta., for nearly 18 years before her recent retirement. That's around 200 meetings — not including the various committees. That faithful commitment is the backbone of the church. Catriona was the first female clerk since the church's inception in 1883. The congregation thanked her with High Tea and a plane ticket to visit her family on the west coast.



Rev. Dr. Alan McPherson retired in April after 25 years as minister of Central, Hamilton, Ont. He is greatly respected and well known for his tireless work not only in the church but also in the community. He was a trustee on the Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation, has regularly served dinners on Thursday nights during the winter months for the Out of the Cold program, was once the padre for the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, and, oh yes, was also moderator of the Presbyterian Church in 1995. This hardly covers his many accomplishments — for a more thorough appreciation go to the People and Places page of our website. He is seen here with his wife Maureen on his last day of service at Central.

**For more People & Places submissions**  
please visit our website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



# Malvern promotes peace and harmony

*Embattled neighbourhood gathers at multi-faith event*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

People of faith in the Malvern neighbourhood of Scarborough, Ont., are working together to make the often troubled community a better place. The second installment of Celebrate Us brought together Presbyterians, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Muslims and Hindus at Malvern's Wickford Trail Park for a family day in August. "No matter what your culture or language, you're welcome here," said Habeeb Ally, the event's MC and disc jockey of an Islamic talk radio program. "We're here to promote peace, love and harmony among ourselves and celebrate our diversity in a grand way."

Malvern Presbyterian Church, where three-quarters of the congregation are of African or Indo-Caribbean descent, was one of the main organizers of the event. They previously helped organize interfaith prayer rallies and peace marches through the streets. "We're trying to be active in our community," said Rev. Wayne Kleinstaub, Malvern's minister and a member of the planning committee. "Events like this are breaking down the barriers between ethnic and religious groups."

More than 1,000 people enjoyed the all-afternoon affair which featured a barbeque, games for kids, local musical entertainment and ethnic dancers. Participants experienced the Muslim call to prayer and readings from the Koran, and were also led in prayer by Kleinstaub, who asked God to "spread love, peace and joy between people." Corporate sponsors were in attendance, as were Toronto police and the Muslim Welfare Association. The Presbytery of Pickering is another staunch supporter, donating \$500 last year and doubling that sum this year.

"We really have cultural harmony here," said Toronto city councillor Raymond Cho. "Malvern is one of the most caring communities and it's starting to develop some pride."

Things haven't always looked so bright. The Malvern community is about 90 per cent non-white, and about 62 per cent are immigrants, according to 2001 Statistics Canada figures. In March 2004, the area's trouble with gang violence came to a head when four men were shot in one week, three fatally. Things in Malvern have improved some since then, but Toronto's problem of gun violence has not disappeared altogether. So far this year, there have been 32 gun-related deaths in the city. Two particularly violent weeks witnessed 22 shootings.

The rash of violence has prompted Mayor David Miller to hire 150 additional police officers by 2006. He hopes the extra officers will have the success it did in Malvern last year, when officers arrested 65 people, mostly involved in gangs.

Jim Greenwood, staff sergeant of 42 division (representing the most culturally diverse community in Canada and in which Malvern is included), said both violent and petty crimes in Malvern are down from last year. However, increased police presence isn't the only thing that's needed to heal a terrorized community. "Events like this are extremely important," said Greenwood, who was also involved in the planning of this year's gathering. "Some people

have the idea that you make a few arrests and the problems are over. That's not the case. Law enforcement is important, but you also have to interact with the community."

Building such relationships was evident at Celebrate Us, where police officers took photos and posed for pictures with participants, and Greenwood received loud cheers and applause when he stood up to say a few words. The hands-on strategy in Malvern has been so successful that it is

being used as a prototype in other troubled neighbourhoods. "Malvern is a different place now," said Greenwood. "It's much friendlier."

Don Meredith, minister with the Grace Christian Life Centre in Scarborough and chair of the Greater Toronto Area Christian Alliance, has been an active and outspoken proponent of ending violence by building strong communities. "It's about working with residents, building on the positive and taking away hopelessness," he said. "We need to bring people out of their homes and take back the streets. And we need to show people that churches care."



Toronto police officers pose with Tammy Taylor, one of the chief organizers of Celebrate Us.



Pews at First Baptist Church in Pass Christian, Miss., swirled in the surge of Hurricane Katrina.

## Church coordinates relief after Katrina damage

*Over 30 church buildings affected in Louisiana*

The Presbyterian Church USA is responding to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, one of the United States' worst-ever disasters. Through its relief arm, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the church is coordinating volunteer efforts, donating money and supplies, reuniting displaced parishioners and pastors and helping congregations get back on their feet.

"I can tell you right now, it will be the biggest thing we've responded to domestically, in terms of the scope of the damage and the number of people involved," said PDA coordinator, Susan Ryan. She said the poor communities in Mississippi will require the most attention. "You've got a lot of communities in Mississippi that don't even have sewerage systems in their communities. They're not going to have the kind of insurance that's going to allow them to recover."

PDA immediately directed \$500,000 to the relief effort and has issued an appeal for \$10 million. The agency is committed to coordinating its efforts with other Christians to extend their response as far as possible. Total damage es-

timates range between \$10 billion and \$25 billion.

Presbyterian World Service & Development is in contact with PDA, and is accepting donations to help with the relief efforts. Rev. Rick Fee, PWS&D's executive director, sent a letter to the church, expressing his sympathy and concern.

More than 30 churches in Southern Louisiana were affected, while presbyteries in Florida, Alabama and Mississippi continue to assess the damage. Rev. Jean Marie Peacock, Vice-Moderator of PC(USA)'s 2004 General Assembly, lived in New Orleans with her husband.

In a letter, written at the end of August, she told the church, "We have seen overhead shots of our neighbourhood where the water is at the rooftops, and we suspect that is true of our home and that we have lost everything. The congregation that I serve [as associate pastor] is in the Lakeview area, one of the first to be inundated with water after the levee broke. We suspect that many from our congregation, who live in the neighbourhood, have lost everything and that the church is filled with water." — AM



## Nigerians fear more Islamization

NIGERIAN CHURCHES, amongst them the Presbyterian, urged the country's government to immediately suspend its membership of the Islamic Development Bank. Christian Council of Nigeria said in a statement that the issue is "explosive, corrosive and suggestive of a subterranean move to Islamise Nigeria."

The moderator of the Presbyterian church, Rev. Ubon Bassey Usung said in a statement, "This country by its constitution is a secular state, and its political leaders were therefore expected to always avoid acts that can undermine this constitutional provision. The government is not doing enough to enhance freedom of religious worship as enshrined in the constitution."

Rev. Rogers Uwadi, CCN president, said the decision could trigger religious tension. "The argument that Nigeria's non-membership of the bank has excluded her from enjoying fringe benefits which membership confers is preposterous," he said. "If we keep silent, then we shall have compromised our faith. We see a hidden agenda here, Nigeria can't claim to be a secular state and yet use the state apparatus to advance the cause of one religion above the other." — ENI

## Kenyans wary of Sharia

"WE DO NOT WANT the same to happen here as is happening in Nigeria and Sudan because of religious laws," said David Githii, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, on behalf of Kenyan church leaders responding to proposed laws that they fear will legalize Sharia or Islamic law.

The leaders, speaking under The Kenya Church, a grouping of traditional Protestant churches and Pentecostal denominations describe the proposal as a 'cunning one', which they say also introduces inequality through the Sharia law.

"As far as we are concerned 90 per cent of the document is OK, but our bone of contention for the future is clear," said Githii.

The Attorney General released the draft on 23 August that would set in place Christian, Islamic and Hindu courts turning Kenya from a secular into a religious state. The proposed referendum is scheduled to go to the electorate on 23 November. — ENI

## Muslims debate Sharia in Ontario

GOVERNMENT questions surrounding the application of Muslim or Sharia law in legal family arbitration has women's groups calling for the removal of such practices from the 1991 *Arbitration Act*. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women is leading the dispute, saying all Ontarians should be under one law (in this case, the *Family Law Act*), and that allowing Sharia law will infringe upon women's equality in custody battles, property disputes and other marriage separation matters.

"Family matters are far too great to allow for the privatization of laws surrounding it, and for alternative, powerful systems to be created," said Alia Hogben, executive director of CCMW. "Why can't there be one law for all people?"

Although the *Arbitration Act* has enabled the practice of Muslim law tribunals since 1991 — a clause in the act allows religious law from virtually any country to be used in the arbitration process — this provision gained notoriety in December, when a report was released from Marion Boyd, former attorney general of Ontario. The government commissioned a review of the arbitration process and its impact on vulnerable people. Boyd was asked to determine if the system offers sufficient protection to such persons and if new safeguards should be adopted. The review was initiated when public concerns were raised regarding religious law in arbitration.

Boyd is in favour of the process, but with the addition of numerous recommendations. She admits that "alternative dispute resolution may provide a venue for continued abuse after the breakdown of a relationship, and therefore, safeguards must be in place."

Hogben said the act currently leaves many issues open to interpretation. Sharia law varies depending where it is exercised, and it is unclear what form would be used in Ontario. Although the very root of arbitration demands consenting individuals who seek the alternative measure voluntarily, Hogben said there's no guarantee that Muslim women are entering into it on their own free will. "It is discriminating against us," she said. "You have to understand that we're believers, and this law is part of our religion. We're also committed to our communities, and we don't like going against our families." Because of this, Hogben explained, it may be difficult for a woman to resist the process if her friends, family and more socially powerful husband are pressuring her to accept it.

Boyd's report recognizes this complexity, as well as the difficulties a woman may have who is in an abusive relationship, has a disability, doesn't speak the language, or if newly immigrated doesn't know her rights under Canadian law. It is because of these vulnerabilities that Boyd recommends several changes and additions to the *Arbitration and Family Law acts*. (See sidebar.)

The Islamic Institute for Civil Justice is the main proponent of Muslim law tribunals. "Muslim personal law is a part of the religious structure of Islam and no non-Muslim government has the right to interfere with it," says their web site. "Muslims living under non-Muslim systems are, as such, required to make every possible effort for the recognition of this principle by their governments. They may also take steps to set up a separate arrangement of their own."

The web site also explains that being a "good Muslim" requires following the law of their faith. Since Canada has its own laws that vary from Sharia, Muslims must try to incorporate their laws into the existing structures, although they recognize being ultimately subject to the laws of the land. They

**'Nowhere in Islam is there an expectation to follow our own law; the tradition is to follow the law of the country'**

say the negative media coverage and opposition they face is a symptom of “sheer Islamophobia and typical slanderous rhetoric of uninformed, biased Western propaganda.”

“If we thought our religious freedom was being impeded, we’d be in front of the crowd disputing it. But this has nothing to do with religious freedom,” argued Hogben. “Is Ontario family law against our religion? No. Does it tell us we can’t practice our religion? No. Many Muslims say we should be able to use our laws in this country. But hang on,” she continued. “We came to Canada, and have been living here for a hundred years. Nowhere in Islam is there an expectation to follow our own law; the tradition is to follow the law of the country.”

Quebec recently ruled that religious law is not allowed in family matters, saying it is of public concern and of public interest and therefore, can’t be dealt with privately. British Columbia also rejected the practice. But Ontario is still trying to figure out what it should do. Brendan Crawley, communications representative at the Ministry of the Attorney General, said the Boyd report is still being reviewed, and it is not certain when a decision will be reached.

Crawley confirmed that Sharia law has been available to Ontarians since 1991, and although it is difficult to tell to what extent it has already been in use, there is a precedent. “It’s always been available to people of all faiths to conduct arbitration according to the principles of those faiths,” he said. “We’ve heard anecdotally that Muslims, Christians and Jewish sects have used it in the past, so in that sense, faith-based arbitration is nothing new.”

Arbitration is often used in commercial matters, and more recently in settling family law disputes that would be costly and time-consuming through the normal court process. Arbitration can be used to settle custody disputes, property claims and spousal support. It cannot be used to change marital status, or in criminal matters. In custody battles, although the decisions of the arbitration process are binding, Ontario courts reserve the right to act in the best interest of the child, regardless of what the arbitrator decides.

Sandra Demson, a family lawyer in Toronto and member of Rosedale, said mediation and arbitration can actually be a positive experience for women who suffered from abuse or power differentials in their marriages. She said it is a form of “collaborative law” where both parties and their lawyers (if using) discuss all the issues in an open format. She said it may be the first time an abused woman was listened to respectfully. Women may also feel more confident in a system that takes her beliefs into account.

“The family law bar does not agree with groups who are saying no to arbitration,” said Demson. “We’re in favour of it, but with certain protections. We have to ensure Canada’s charter and equal rights are respected.”

The Boyd report states that the active parties can choose the arbitrator they wish, who must be neutral to both parties — although this can be changed if both parties agree. Once a decision is made, the Ontario court can enforce the decision if one of the parties refuses to comply. There is an appeals process, but it can be tricky for a court judge to make a decision about a religious law he knows little or nothing about.

Although Boyd’s conclusions centre on the fact that “tolerance and accommodation of minority groups who seek to engage in alternative dispute resolution must be balanced against a firm commitment to individual autonomy,” Hogben maintains that “this is not about multiculturalism.” She said religious arbitration is a slippery slope along the road to women’s equality, and sets the stage for other faiths to use passages in holy texts to discriminate against women. — AM

For more information, visit [www.crimw.com](http://www.crimw.com)  
[www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca)  
<http://muslim-canada.org/justice.html>

## Sharia safeguards

Marion Boyd “did not find any evidence to suggest that women are being systematically discriminated against as a result of arbitration of family law issues.” She believes that arbitration should continue to be allowed in family law cases, and that the Arbitration Act should continue to allow arbitrations using religious law — both of which would be subject to the safeguards she recommends in her report. Some of these safeguards include:

- the agreement to arbitrate must be made in writing at the time of the dispute, before the arbitration occurs, and signed by the parties and witnesses. Agreements made at the time of marriage must be re-confirmed at the time of the dispute.
- a court can set aside any arbitration award if it is not in the best interest of the child, if a party did not first seek independent legal advice, and if the party wasn’t sufficiently informed of the agreement and what it means.
- agreements must be given in writing and should include things such as a detailed list of issues, whether the decision is binding or advisory, the form of law to be used, and an acknowledgment that the parties understand the principles behind religious law.
- arbitrators should develop a detailed set of principles under which they operate and distribute them to both parties
- the arbitrator must meet with each party individually, to assess whether there is abuse or an imbalance of power (using a standardized testing method), if they understand the process, and if they consulted independent legal advice or waived their right to do so.
- independent legal counsel must verify that a party sought their advice, understands the process, and was given alternatives.
- the government should conduct public education programs about family law, and how both the court system and religious law applies to this area.
- arbitrators should be reviewed by the government and report annually to the attorney general regarding the number of cases they’ve heard, the outcomes of those cases, and any complaints about the system they have been told about.



# Responding to Niger's 'silent famine'

*Thousands starving in world's second-poorest country*

Presbyterians are helping raise money for starving families in Niger, where drought and a locust plague have left the West African country in a severe state of famine. Presbyterian World Service & Development is supporting a major relief effort through Action by Churches Together. ACT members Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS) and Lutheran World Relief have already distributed more than 1,000 tonnes of food to about 60,000 people.

LWR will also include longer-term efforts in its Niger response, where 64 per cent of inhabitants survive on less than a dollar a day. These plans include the distribution of 10 tonnes of seed stock for future plantings, and the repair and construction of grain banks, which store seeds between harvests.

Although donations from the public are now coming in, thanks in part to a flood of recent media stories chronicling the horrors of the famine, critics say it has been too long in coming. While ACT and HEKS have been helping since April — some of the first aid agencies to do so — the international community has been otherwise slow to respond. "It's very regrettable that it takes the media to bring attention to a problem before aid starts moving," said Rev. Rick Fee, director of PWS&D.

Dubbed a "silent famine" by the United Nations, potential need was broadcast in 1997 through the famine early warning system. This system tracks climate, crop production and human influence and looks to the future to hypothesize where hunger may arise. More recently, the World Food Program predicted a food shortage in October, and issued a \$3.5-million appeal in February to help curb the disaster. Another appeal for \$19 million in March netted about \$4.6 million. "Nothing was done. No one responded," said Fee. "People coped for the first few years and have increasingly lost what they had in reserve, in every way possible. Now they're at the bottom."

It is estimated that locusts destroyed about 15 per cent of last year's cereal crops and almost 40 per cent of grasslands for cattle. Many people are living on what grows wild and haven't had a proper meal for more than three months. In total, the government estimates a national crop deficit of 224,000 tonnes, putting nearly 25 per cent of Niger's 12 million people at risk.

Children have been greatly affected. The U.N. estimates about 800,000 children under five are suffering from hunger,



**This new well was constructed with the help of local church partners of HEKS/ACT.**

including 150,000 faced with severe malnutrition. Medecins Sans Frontier has been admitting about 1,000 children a week at each of its five emergency feeding centres since June. The land-locked country already has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world: 121 of every 1,000 infants dies before its first birthday.

As one of the hottest countries on the map (four-fifths of Niger is desert), food shortages are common. Bashir Barké Doka, Niger's HEKS/ACT coordinator, said they have been running agricultural development projects in 30 villages for more than five years. Together with their local partners they engage in irrigation, fertilising soils and cultivating vegetable gardens. "Our goal is to get people to produce more and have more money to survive years of bad harvests," he said.

LWR, with a 30-year history in Niger, has been purchasing food from local markets in Niger and neighbouring markets in Nigeria, and distributing it to approximately 93,000 people. These food rations will meet immediate needs and bridge the gap until the World Food Program food distribution pipelines reach these communities.

PWS&D is currently accepting donations to help with this crisis. — AM with files from PWS&D and ACT.



# Nutrition seen as source of self-confidence

*Nicaraguan advocate works with poor farmer women*

**A**zucena Zelaya Antunez doesn't think of nutrition as only a health issue, but also a political force. In developing countries, like her native Nicaragua, good nutrition can give women the energy to take charge and assume a leadership role in their communities. "We're already seeing changes!" she said during a visit to church offices in May. "Many women are making their own decisions and growing new foods, giving them an income."

Antunez is a program coordinator for Soynica, a 25-year-old non-governmental organization in Nicaragua. She has a degree in business administration and joined Soynica in 1994 to work in communities promoting and teaching preparation techniques for soy, which was introduced to the country a quarter century ago. Presbyterian World Service & Development helps fund Soynica's programs.

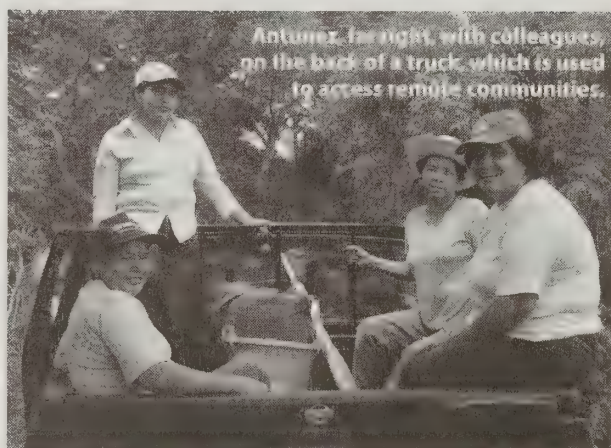
Currently, Antunez works with 400 poor farmer families, teaching them about health and nutrition, breast-feeding, hygiene, new agricultural techniques and food security. Since the typical farmer's diet usually consists of corn, beans and sorghum, new additions are a welcomed and necessary change. A diversified diet not only benefits their health, but leads to increased income from selling cash crops of fruits and vegetables. "We've helped some children improve their nutritional status," said Antunez, "and families have changed their eating habits. The soil condition has also improved and we've been working on water collection with wells and tanks."

"I like working with the people on the countryside, and sharing with them my knowledge and learning about their cultural ideas. I love being able to share with women and to be able to journey with them towards positive change."

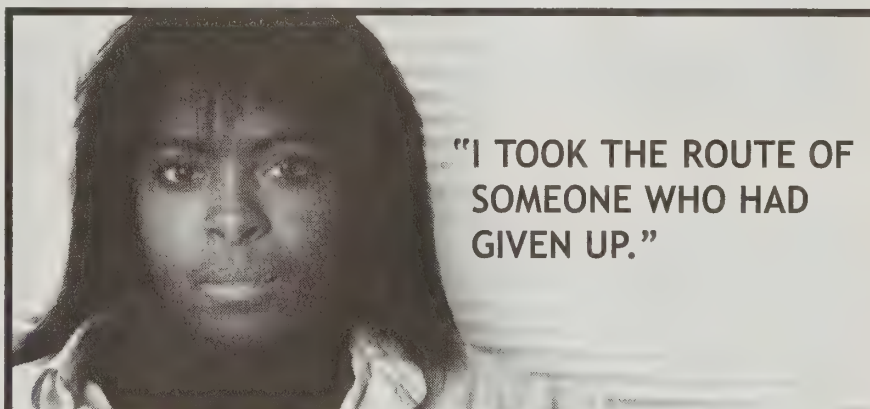
Empowering women — who are traditionally disadvantaged in Latin American countries — remains Antunez's main goal. Although Soynica does work with men, programs tailored to women's

needs are given top priority. "There are many women who never left their homes — and if they did, their husbands didn't know — but now they will come out to the workshops," said Antunez. "And many women are trying to give their children a better life, beginning with pregnancy."

She said women are gaining enough clout and self-confidence to petition things from their mayor's office to benefit their families or community. They're also helping improve the structure of their homes from knowledge they've gained from Soyni-



ca's programs. "But we still need to work on ourselves as women," said Antunez, "and that's why Soynica has recently elaborated on its strategy on gender, to help us continue with that empowerment." — AM



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## Same-sex marriage minister punished

A MINISTER OF THE Reformed Church in America was found guilty and punished for presiding over the marriage of his daughter to another woman. Rev. Dr. Norman Kansfield, 65, was tried at the RCA's General Synod in June and was fired from his teaching post and suspended from the office of minister until he repents for his actions.

Kansfield married his daughter only days after the 2004 General Synod adopted a resolution affirming that marriage is between one man and one woman. He was found guilty of contradicting the church's position, contradicting his ordination vows and violating his vows as a professor of theology at New Brunswick Seminary in New Jersey.

Speaking in his own defence, Kansfield said, "Where synod has made things binding, I have been willing to submit. [On the issue of gay marriage] synod has offered advice to us." His lawyer argued that General Synod has not officially ruled that ministers cannot preside over same-sex marriages, and the notion of discipline for a violation was not stated at previous synods.

General Synod also discussed making changes to its Book of Church Order, making clear the restrictions on ministers and same-sex marriage, but the changes were denied in favour of a period of denomination-wide discussion on the matter. — with files from *The Church Herald*

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## Christians' ignorance of forgiveness called 'scandalous'

Loving thy neighbour comes with strings attached. Jesus taught Christians to forgive the person who wronged them; trading anger and retaliation for trust, tenderness and a rebuilt relationship. Of course, these instructions are easier said than done. The sobering reality upsets Rev. Leonel Narvaez, a Roman Catholic missionary priest from Colombia. "It causes me great sadness how we Christians know so little about forgiveness and reconciliation — especially when these things are at the core of our faith."

Educated at Cambridge and Harvard universities, Narvaez has spent almost 30 years working on conflict resolution and the peace-building process. In addition to living and working with nomads in the desert regions of Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia, and later in the Amazon rainforest in Colombia, Narvaez toiled for three years with a negotiation between the Colombian government and the leftist guerilla organization, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Helping nearly 8,000 guerilla soldiers reinsert themselves into regular society was, according to Narvaez, "a powerful experience."

Although the negotiations ultimately failed, the priest has received awards for other peace efforts, such as establishing nine schools of reconciliation and forgiveness in Colombia and Brazil. Narvaez was in Canada as the 2005 international visitor of the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, and spent a day in February at the Presbyterian Church's Toronto offices where he spoke about conflict resolution. "It's sad and scandalous that we don't know more about the method and process of forgiveness and reconciliation," he said.

Forgiving a neighbour can often seem an impossible achievement, but Narvaez said as Christians, we have little choice to do otherwise. "I must stress how difficult it is to forgive and reconcile for both victims and victimizers," he said during a sermon at church offices. "But Jesus reconciled us with God and appointed us as ministers of reconciliation."

Despite this calling, conflict resolution remains a difficult task. When the peace process with the guerillas in Colombia failed — where 90 per cent of the population is Catholic — Narvaez was deeply depressed. He had studied the process of reconciliation for years, and had "the magicians of conflict resolution" with him. Why then, did his efforts fail? "I realized one small thing was missing," he said. "We were using scientific methods, but we forgot the spiritual tool that lies in forgiveness."

Christ's love and mercy are essential ingredients when the hate and anger on both sides are indescribable, according to Narvaez. Understanding these primitive emotions is essential to solving problems, but letting go of them is often barred by a strong allegiance to memories. "Even in Christianity we celebrate memories when we remember the crime of the crucifixion," said Narvaez. "You must look at the memories of the victim and the victimizer and balance those memories so you're able to rebuild trust in the person who offended you."

When tempers have simmered down and anger has dissipated, objective causes of conflict such as economics, politics, and social issues must be dealt with immediately — issues that keep Colombia from attaining peace. If not solved, seeds of new conflict can begin to grow and violence will escalate. Because of its fragile nature, Narvaez said peace-building initiatives need the church's support. "We must pray for those who are learning to forgive and reconcile." — AM

**'You must look at the memories of the victim and the victimizer and balance those memories so you're able to rebuild trust in the person who offended you'**





## Stratford exhibits AIDS photos

Knox, Stratford, hosted a photo exhibit in August and September to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Towards a World without AIDS: The Beauty and the Tragedy showcased the work of Carl Hiebert, who travelled to Malawi on behalf of Presbyterian World Service & Development. His pictures chronicle the lives of people living with the disease.

"Something has captured people's hearts and imaginations," said Terry Hastings, minister at Knox. "There's been a great response from the congregation. It emphasizes the fact that these people are our neighbours. They're not just 'over there'." Community members and tourists also dropped in to look at the photos.

Knox's clerk of session Lois Tutt was motivated to act when she saw a photo essay of Hiebert's work that appeared in February's *Presbyterian Record*. The exhibit was free, but donations to PWS&D's HIV/AIDS campaign were welcomed. The CD *Christ our Hope*, a collection of hymns sung by the choir at Armour Heights, Toronto, was played during the exhibit and was available for purchase. All proceeds went to the AIDS campaign.

Several congregations have already expressed an interest in hosting their own exhibit. The 36 framed 16" x 20" photos and seven PWS&D posters used at Knox are available. Contact PWS&D at 1-800-619-7301 for more information. — AM







BY AMY MACLACHLAN

# ISRAEL: JESUS WALKED HERE

A tour through the Bible  
and the latest headlines

I SPENT EIGHT exhausting days in the Holy Land as a guest of Israel's Ministry of Tourism; a strategy of the government's to balance the reporting on the country and hopefully to entice others to travel there. During our first dinner, at a restaurant in Tel Aviv, the ministry's branch director of hosting operations, Benjamin-Gad Ninnayi, presented his case passionately: "Why look elsewhere? This country is a diamond, a treasure. There are beautiful things all over the world, but they can't compare to Jerusalem."

Yes, perhaps, but as I came to understand, attracting tourists to the Holy Land is no easy feat. As a result of the 1987 and 2000 intifadas (the often violent Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza), tourists to the country spiraled downwards. Tourism dropped from 2.7 million visitors in 2000 to 860,000 two years later. The government hopes to reach 1.8 million this year.

I must admit, when I received the invitation to travel to Israel with three other Canadian journalists, I didn't exactly jump at the chance. Headlines about suicide bombers and terrorist at-

tacks flashed through my mind. I called my husband. Without a second thought he said, "You should go."

The normalcy of daily life struck me repeatedly. On our last day in Tel Aviv we strolled along the crowded downtown streets, which are lined with designer shops, sunny outdoor cafes and trendy restaurants. Everywhere I looked, people were simply living. Shopping, eating, talking with friends — something that seemed a beautiful testament to the human ability to live on in spite of tragedy.

I began to understand Benjamin's words from our first night. "You are here to see with your own eyes and experience the normal life of Israel. It is a beautiful place. Jews and Arabs live side by side." He told us about an Arab woman who babysits his children. Our driver, Nachshon Zada, said he has many Arab neighbours and his children run freely in the neighbourhood, even at a very young age. He said everyone looks out for each other.

Contrasting such happy images with visuals we see in the news had my mind working overtime. Thankfully, part of our



Jerusalem viewed across the valley of Kidron. The 20th century grid towering on the 17th century Dome of the Rock, which makes it Jerusalem's most visible shrine.



tour included sailing on the Sea of Galilee, where the water was so still I found it difficult to imagine the violent storm Jesus once calmed. The tranquil moments spent on the lake (known as the Kineret to locals) gave me time to collect my thoughts. No wonder Jesus got in a boat and sailed these waters when he needed peace from the crowds. Later that evening, while strolling along the boardwalk, I saw a young man fishing. Almost immediately on casting his line into the water, a fish bit the bait-free hook. He told us he had only been there for 20 minutes and his bucket was nearly full. That evening, my relaxation continued at the beautiful Scots Hotel in Tiberias, which used to be a hospital built by a Scottish doctor 150 years ago, and is now run by the Church of Scotland.

Several days later and wanting to experience some Jewish nightlife, we walked to the downtown area of new Jerusalem at about 10:30 at night. The streets were absolutely packed with pre-teens, teenagers and young adults. Groups of girls who couldn't have been older than 10 wandered the cobblestone streets freely, bothered by no one. I heard music playing, people laughing, and youngsters enjoying life. I thought of my reaction if I were to see these young people out after dark by themselves in downtown Toronto. I shared these thoughts with one of my fellow journalists, who was equally surprised by the

obvious contrast. But to locals, it is simply a way of life.

Another aspect of Israeli life hit me while in Jerusalem. I awoke one morning to find out that a suicide bomber had attacked a Tel Aviv nightclub where some Israeli soldiers were enjoying an evening out. The somber faces of our hosts that morning sparked a feeling of hopelessness in me. It seemed there was no solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; nothing that would make both sides happy or satisfied. I tried to imagine living in a place where every day there is the threat of violence. It's not the fear of that violence that would be so difficult to live with, but the on-going feeling of despair and helplessness.

We experienced some military checkpoints as we drove south from Jerusalem towards the Dead Sea, but it was never a problem getting through. There were often soldiers who checked handbags on the way into restaurants or markets, and young army recruits casually walked the streets in groups with M-16s strapped to their backs (Israel requires army enlistment at age 17), but most measures seem to be taken to keep people safe.

While in Jerusalem, we met a Canadian woman who has lived there for 22 years, leading a messianic congregation with her husband. Wayne and Anne Hilsden have helped turn King of Kings Assembly into the largest Christian church in Israel. The international congregation began with 12 people and now is about 600-strong. They honour their Jewish roots by reading from the Torah, celebrating Jewish feasts, and sometimes singing in Hebrew.

Anne had two young boys when they moved to Israel and now has two more. They call Israel home — despite a close-call that would cause most mothers to pack up and leave. Several years ago, Anne and one of her sons were going to take a bus to an appointment. Pressed for time, they decided to hop into a taxi instead. The very bus they were supposed to board was blown up by Palestinian terrorists. The shocking scene was not enough to scare the Hilsdens away. Anne said she loves Israel — especially the sunny weather, the great food and the warm and friendly people. "It has been really great to bring up our boys in Jerusalem. It's very safe. They're really protective of children here," she said, conscious that her words are surprising.

Despite the potential to worry, I felt safe during the entire trip. There is so much to see in this small country (less than 500 kilometres from end to end, roughly the size of Prince Edward Island). Our guide, Ziv Cohen, was indispensable. His knowledge of the Holy Land was impressive and his personal insight, sense of humour, and the care he took to ensure we saw what we wanted to see, went beyond the call of duty. Ziv has a degree in the history and geography of Israel, is a certified guide and is working on a masters degree in political science of the Middle East. He charges \$350 US a day for the rental of a van and his guide services.

From the cool shores of Galilee to the blazing sun of the desert, the awesome sights didn't cease. I took a cable car up to Masada, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a fort built by King Herod in the Judean desert. Herod never needed to use the site as such, but in 70 A.D. about 1,000 Jews took refuge there during a war with the Romans. Their safety remained for





**A crumbling synagogue in Capernaum; Kojak the camel waits to give tourists a ride on the Mount of Olives.**

three years, until 15,000 Roman soldiers figured out how to penetrate the fort. Not wanting to endure Roman capture, they decided to kill themselves; including women and children. I sat in the remains of the synagogue where the decision was made and carried out. I tried to imagine the bloodshed that day — the desperation needed to trigger such an act. The sun beat down upon me as large black crows perched themselves on the edges of the synagogue ruins. Goosebumps bristled along the back of my neck.

I visited Capernaum, where Christ stayed with Peter in his home. While there, I saw ruins of what is believed to be Peter's home, where an inner room still remains like that used by early Christians who feared persecution. Looking upon the site that may have been the first Christian meeting place left me in awe.

I also visited Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish documents dating from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D., were found in caves. I also toured 4,000-year-old Jaffa, where Peter brought Tabitha back to life and Jonah set out on his fateful voyage. I walked the shores of the Jordan River, floated in the salty waters of the Dead Sea, and visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum, where the heart-wrenching exhibits and photographs were often too terrible to look at. I ate sweet dates, figs and apricots, salty goat cheese, smooth hummus, rich olive oil spiced with fresh oregano and drank plenty of Israeli wine.

And of course, I went to Jerusalem. The "Golden City," taking its name from the creamy-coloured stone used to build most of the city, is magical, spiritual and awe-inspiring. The Old City is one that has to be seen to be believed, and new Jerusalem holds an inexplicable quality of its own. The museums and markets, the first-class restaurants with succulent, international cuisine and the palpable feeling that this is God's land, made Jerusalem unforgettable.

It was the details of daily life that interested me most while in Jerusalem. The Old City captivated me, with its stone streets and distinct quarters where Jews, Muslims, Arab Christians and Armenian Christians live. Amidst Temple ruins and crumbling Roman columns, laundry hung on lines between houses, bright-

ly coloured pashminas and silk scarves decorated peddlers' shops, Orthodox Jews washed their hands at a fountain before praying at the Western Wall, students of orthodox schools lounged in grassy courtyards between classes and soldiers guarded the entrance up to the Temple Mount, where the Al Aqsa mosque stands.

The city shut down on the Sabbath. It amazed me that the hotel offered a special Shabbat elevator that automatically made trips up and down so observant Jews didn't have to push the buttons, and lights in the rooms were set on timers. The extent to which religious Jews go to observe biblical laws fascinated me. Ziv told me that the Bible gives Jews their identity, and I realized how true this is.



Israel's Supreme Court sits quite close to the gates of the Old City. This location reflects the Bible's frequent references to judges, priests and elders sitting at the city gates, doling out judgment,

making official announcements and keeping the peace.

As with any tourist destination, there were people looking to capitalize on tourists' emotions. Some young men were selling brochures on the Via Dolorosa (Stations of the Cross) for two shekels. In Nazareth, one shopkeeper was selling vials of Holy Land soil (basically a tablespoon of dirt). At the Mount of Olives, where there is a fantastic lookout over Jerusalem, a man was selling rides on his camel, Kojak, while other peddlers were trying to entice tourists to buy maps, flags, artists' prints and just about anything else vaguely related to Israel. As long as I firmly told them I wasn't interested, they didn't bother me.

A brand new visitors' centre in Caesarea, the ancient sea port built by King Herod in the first century B.C., was a highlight. Tourists can enjoy a short video documenting the building of Caesarea, where Paul was imprisoned, and witness the port's subsequent sinking to the depths of the sea. Avid divers can even don their wetsuits and explore the ruins preserved in the Mediterranean. An interactive experience uses rear-screen projection to bring to life 13 different characters from biblical times, including the apostle Paul and Herod. Visitors can ask the moving holograms questions and they respond in larger-than-life animation. It is one of only a few places in the world to showcase such an attraction. The entire revamping of the centre and harbour cost almost \$8 million Cdn.

On our first night, Benjamin told us, "You will not find another place like Israel. Everywhere you throw a stone, there is history." The most amazing thing is that archaeologists like Dr. Dan Bahat, who took part in some of the most significant archaeological digs in the country and teaches regularly at the University of Toronto, say this is only the beginning of Israel's treasures. "Everyday, our knowledge is growing. It is not the same Jerusalem anymore," said Bahat over dinner on our last night in the city. "I believe our greatest discoveries are ahead of us."



Palestinian farmers nurture young olive trees in barrels, as seen from the road between Jerusalem and Nablus.

# PALESTINE: JESUS WAS BORN HERE

BY DAVID HARRIS

## A quick tour through the land of olives and lemons

**I**F MARY AND JOSEPH were to arrive in Bethlehem late at night to find all the local hotels full in 2005, Jesus would more likely have been born in the corner of a stone building or plaza.

Manger Square is a tiled acre with no mangers and no animals in sight. The rest of the town is slogan-painted almost white stone. Off to one side of the square is the Church of the Nativity, entered by the so-called Door of Humility, which requires one to stoop low to enter. (The door was blocked off in the 16th-century to keep the Ottomans from riding their horses into the church.)

The place where Jesus is revered to have been born is a white marble grotto lit by 53 lamps.

Today, it isn't Ottoman conquerors, but the nine-metre wall being erected by Israel that causes grief in and around Bethlehem.

It's just eight kilometers north to Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. And if you head further north to Nablus (the ancient site of Shechem), you follow pretty much what was the old Roman road to Nazareth — the one Jesus

would have used on his journeys from home to Jerusalem.

On the way, rounding yet another tight bend in the road, bright blue plastic barrels amid verdant green are startling. Rusty old brown barrels come into focus, making it seem as if perhaps this particular stretch is a garbage dump. Then, all of a sudden, little branches reaching up out of the barrels can be seen. Aha! These are young olive trees being nurtured by Palestinian farmers.

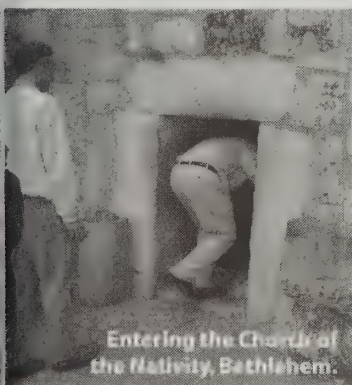
Olives and lemons are among the most important crops for Palestinians.

For travellers who want to experience life in Palestine, one of the best ways is to arrange a trip through Sabeel, a self-described "ecumenical grassroots liberation movement among Palestinian Christians."

Founded in 1992, Sabeel has played an important role in highlighting the difficulties Christians in Palestine have faced during the Israeli occupation. Less well known is their ability to put together travel programs for visitors. And while their literature sometimes lacks nuance, the guides they provide are well-balanced in their commentary and knowledge of the complex history and contemporary difficulties that exist between Israel and Palestinian Arabs.

Sabeel can also arrange for tourists to visit and even share a meal with a Palestinian family. Arab hospitality is famous and it's best to be on the hungry side before such an occasion.

For more information, contact [visit@sabeel.org](mailto:visit@sabeel.org).





# JERUSALEM: CHRISTIANS, JEWS, MUSLIMS AND A BARRIER

BY SANDRA DEMSON

Looking for ways to creatively bring hope to all who live there

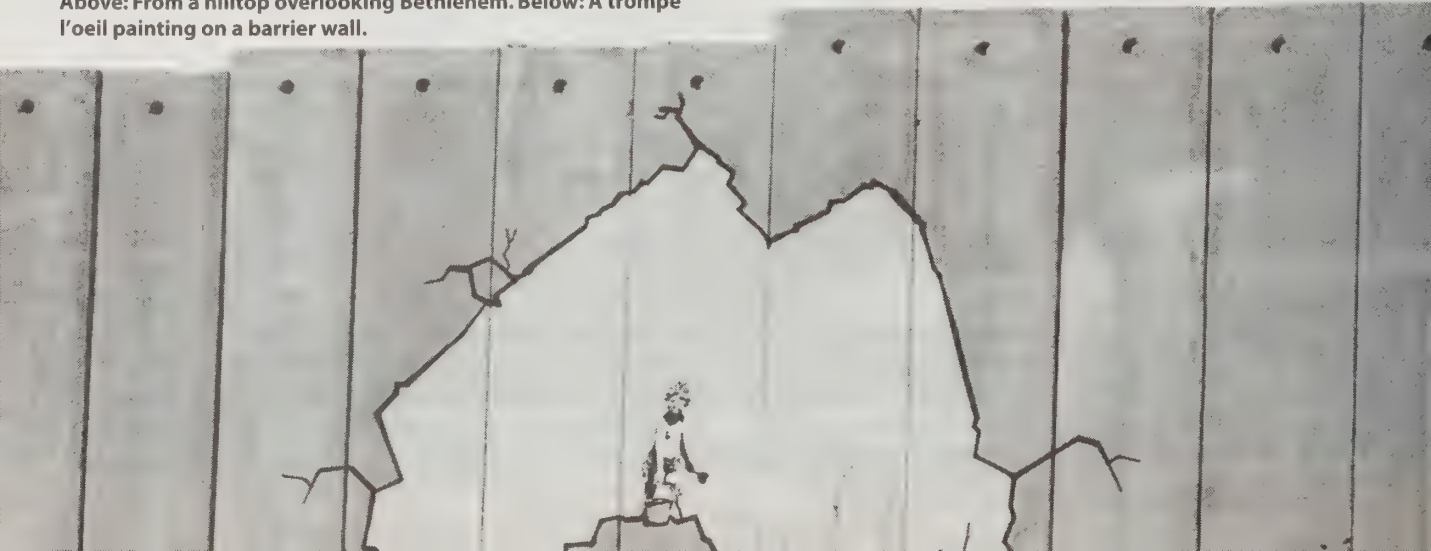


**T**HE TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE is situated on a hilltop overlooking Bethlehem, the road to Jerusalem, the Arab village Beit Safafa and the Jewish settlement Gilo. From its roof the security barrier being constructed by the Israeli government can be traced winding in and out around Bethlehem. Tantur is an ideal spot for Christians to come to learn about this land that is holy for Christians, Jews and Muslims alike. Tantur sponsors such ecumenical and inter faith studies, and I attended a panel discussion there in June where a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim together discussed current efforts for peace in the Middle East.

I had travelled to Jerusalem with members of the Board of the Canadian Friends of the Ecole Biblique, a very lively and scholarly group of Catholic and Protestant clergy and laity. This Board has demonstrated its own commitment to Christians in Jerusalem by raising the funds necessary to restore and renovate the aging library at the Ecole. The question on all our minds was: how can we as Christians living abroad support the diverse Christian communities here in the Holy Land?

At Tantur the Christian member of the inter faith panel, Rev. Alex Awad, the Jerusalem-born president of a Baptist College there, told us job creation for their young people, so they would

**Above: From a hilltop overlooking Bethlehem. Below: A trompe l'oeil painting on a barrier wall.**





stay in Palestine, was of the greatest import. A similar response was given by Dr. Petra Heldt, a Lutheran minister and Executive Secretary of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel. The local Christian communities, she told us, are all struggling because their young people are choosing not to stay, but rather to immigrate to Western countries that offer more economic opportunities. Petra went on to caution us against following the example being discussed by some churches, to divest or adopt other economic sanctions to support or oppose particular positions in the current political situation in the Middle East. Churches abroad taking such positions may be well-intentioned but the impact on the Christian communities there, she was quite sure, would be negative. She commended the model of the Orthodox communities in Jerusalem who faithfully pray for Orthodox communities throughout the world, and said it would be far better for churches abroad to reverse their example and pray for the Christian communities in Palestine and in Israel.

The World Council of Churches has started a program under the supervision of Dr. Chris Ferguson of the United Church of Canada, sending volunteers to live with and accompany Palestinian Christians. Chris also told us about Pentecostal groups that are similarly supporting, both financially and spiritually, the Israeli settlers in their efforts to move on to more and more of the West Bank. These are all well-intentioned efforts, but clearly in the name of their Christian faith, working at cross-purposes.

How can Christians be helpful in this situation, I asked myself as I stood beneath that very high security barrier in Bethlehem. Intended to shut out terrorists, it also excludes West Bank Palestinians from the vibrant Israeli economy and interferes significantly in their own local life. As I stood there, feeling the isolation and desperation of the Palestinians living behind the high barrier, I looked along the wall and saw to my surprise, astonishing paintings on the wall — of a girl, being carried aloft by a bunch of balloons, of children playing at the seashore, ocean waves crashing through a painted hole in the wall, and further on, heroic messages written in Spanish. What an opportunity — this barrier between peoples could be painted and covered with beautiful representations of the best in the human spirit — love for our children, hopes and dreams that they might live in a peaceful world. Is this a project artists abroad might sponsor?

We find Christians taking very different sides, from encouraging the settlers to condemning the current Israeli government policies in the West Bank (as if there were only one policy being debated today in Israel). Maybe it is inevitable that Christians with different backgrounds would instinctively align themselves with Jews or Arabs, depending on whose story they know, whose voices they are more attuned to.

But is choosing sides in an already polarized context helpful in any way? How can pronouncements that trigger either judgmentalism or defensiveness lead to reconciliation between peoples? Contrast such actions with the work of the international charity Aid to the Church in Need that is helping Christian families in Bethlehem market their olive wood devotional carvings



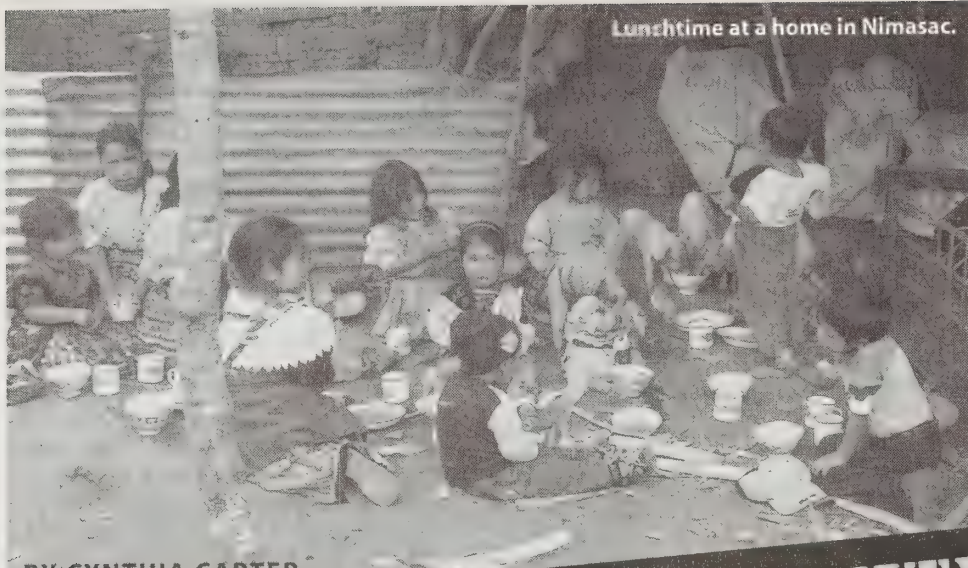
**Above: The Mosque of the Dome. Below: The author in front of the Damascus Gates.**

to the World Youth Day pilgrims, giving the Bethlehem carvers a glimmer of hope that the church has not forgotten about them.

The wonderful thing about visiting Jerusalem is the beauty of the Old City, arising as much from its religious roots as from the golden sunlight on the Jerusalem stone. In our prayers for peace in Jerusalem, let us look for ways to creatively bring hope to all who live there and trust that through our prayers the good will between diverse peoples that is nurtured in places like Tantur may prevail over the barriers so prevalent today.

Sandra Demson is a member of Rosedale, Toronto. This article was submitted prior to her joining the *Record's* Board of Directors.





BY CYNTHIA CARTER

## GUATEMALA: MODERNITY AND DETERIORATION

### The four-decade civil war continues to haunt the people

AS I STEPPED OFF the plane into the sweltering humidity of Guatemala City, the realization that I had just entered a completely foreign world set in. Since my knowledge of the country was limited, I felt vulnerable being exposed to this different culture. Over the next 17 days, my mission group and I would come to an understanding of the beautiful yet controversial country of Guatemala. We learned of the triumphs of the Guatemalan people and were grounded by their daily struggles and misfortunes.

On the surface, Guatemala is a country with immense natural beauty and flowing highlands. Yet, this breathtaking land is restrained by the bitter problems it faces as a repercussion of a 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. The toils and tribulations faced by Guatemala during the war have yet to cease, although nine years have passed since the peace accord was signed. The people of Guatemala continue to face exploitation and violence.

Our guide was Ken Kim, mission staff with The Presbyterian Church in Canada for over 10 years. We were pleased to meet his wife, Kennis and four children. We also met with human rights advocates and church leaders. Through them, we were able to grasp a basic understanding of Guatemala in context: the history, the civil war and the aftermath.

While in Guatemala City, the capital, I witnessed the reality of the dual nature of this country. The newer part of the city was very modern, much like we would see in large cities in North America. The older part of the city, where the majority of our time was spent, was made up of deteriorating buildings, streets

littered with garbage and pungent air pollution.

We spent several days at the Francisco Coll School, which is situated in the municipal dump in Guatemala City. We spent two days painting the interior of the school. During our final day there, the students put on a presentation to show us their gratitude. Their excitement was overwhelming. Personally, the children were the most touching part of the trip. They demonstrated great affection towards us, and were very welcoming.

We toured the classrooms and the area of the dump where the people, including the students, lived. Our meeting with the school director, Sister Alba, informed us of the troubled lives these children lead.

While the parents scavenge through the dump for recyclable items that can be traded for money, the children are left alone to wander around and fend for themselves. The area is polluted, resulting in low personal hygiene in the children. The influence of drugs and violence is very prominent, with neighbourhood fights and shoot-outs a regular occurrence. The children who come to the school require more than just formal education. They need a place where they can be exposed to love and support, as well as basic life skills. The school also attempts to reach their students at a deeper level, through faith and an emphasis on self-esteem and personal growth. With the support of external funds, since the government does not fund the school, Sister Alba and her co-workers make this an oasis for the children.

After several days in Guatemala City, we made our way through the beautiful countryside to the city of Quetzaltenango. We went to two rural Mayan communities to visit women's groups supported by the Fraternidad Maya. The Fraternidad supports these groups, primarily by providing loans so they are able to produce goods to sell. Several groups focus on weaving, while others grow potatoes or raise cattle. The Fraternidad also provides these women with an opportunity to participate in workshops for training and building self-esteem.

We attended a church service in a remote Mayan village called Nimasac. The service was held on the site where we did our work project — laying a church foundation.

This trip touched my heart and opened my eyes to a whole new world. The Youth in Mission program provided a valuable experience to witness another culture, to learn of Christian service and to heighten my faith.

Cynthia Carter is a second year university student who attends Knox, Kouchibouguac, New Brunswick.





The Church of Astvatsatsin overlooking Lake Sevan, in Armenia.

Tripping across  
centuries to the  
heart of Christian  
orthodoxy

## THE CAUCASUS: OLD CHURCH MEETS NEW NATION

BY ALEX MACLEOD

**T**HE MAN ON THE TRAIN from Tbilisi to Yerevan chatted away busily on his cell phone. He then turned with equal devotion to a laptop computer. But, when we struck up a conversation he was, like most Armenians, quick to define his country's identity in terms of the past rather than some high-tech future. "Armenia is the oldest Christian nation in the world," he announced with pride.

Looking out the window from my hostel in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, I can see cranes everywhere, lined up against the massive backdrop of Mt. Ararat, where Noah is said to have beached his ark after the flood. In Armenia, and the Caucasus in general, there is construction all around and you'll find the new and old constantly juxtaposed in ways that help explain what's going on.

The three countries that make up the Caucasus — Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan — are each in recovery mode. Squeezed in between the Caspian and the Black seas, they boast ancient cultures, impressive monuments, and sublime mountain landscapes. And yet in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union a series of wars have consumed them. For the most part, these conflicts are rooted in ethnic and religious divisions.

Armenia stands out in the Caucasian mix. While Georgia is closely, albeit uneasily tied to Russia with a common Christian Orthodox heritage and Azerbaijan's Muslim identity connects it to both Central Asia and the Middle East, Armenia is more of

an island. And as a distinct people in an isolated land, Armenians have been submerged in the conflicts of the past century.

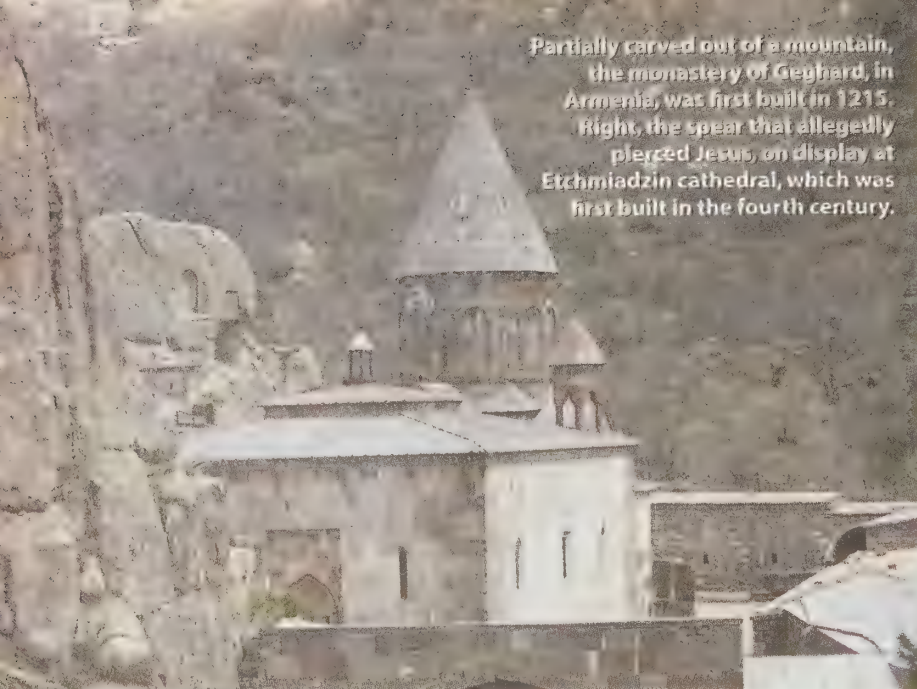
I flew into Baku, Azerbaijan, en route to Armenia. Coming from the airport, we passed thousands of abandoned oil wells littering a desolate suburban landscape. Oil has changed this region in the last hundred years, and since 2000 at an unprecedented pace. Downtown Baku teems with fashionable boutiques and new money. Despite an 11-year-old ceasefire treaty, the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia means that the border is closed and all travellers between the two countries must pass through Georgia. My next stop was Tbilisi, Georgia.

Tbilisi is the poorest of the three capital cities in the region. Potholes the size of craters seem to confirm the fact and transform regular taxi drivers into slalom driving maniacs. While kidnapping has subsided in the last few years, Georgia remains a dangerous place for foreigners. Still, recent developments suggest a brighter future for the country. Earnest preparations for a visit by U.S. President George Bush in May, such as the landscaping of American flags at traffic hubs, served as a reminder of how enthusiastically Georgia has tried to orient itself in a Western direction.

Ever since the people of Georgia rose up in the so-called Rose Revolution of 2003 to overthrow a dictatorship, Washington has taken initiative to cultivate good relations. With the political change in Tbilisi pro-American democratic forces are



Partially carved out of a mountain, the monastery of Geghard, in Armenia, was first built in 1215. Right, the spear that allegedly pierced Jesus, on display at Etchmiadzin cathedral, which was first built in the fourth century.



gaining momentum in the area, from Ukraine to Central Asia. A huge oil pipeline project running from Baku through Georgia to Ceyhan, a deepwater port on the Turkish Mediterranean coast, offers another reason for the strengthening of diplomatic ties.

"Don't believe what you read in the newspapers. It's all the same here," explained Vladimir, a Russian living in Baku. "Whether you are in Azerbaijan, Georgia or Armenia it makes no difference. Everywhere you will find very bad corruption. We have no hope of good government. The oil won't change that. It will make it worse. Many Westerners can come here if they want. Nothing will change."

The border between Georgia and Armenia is relaxed. You could get a 20 dollar visa on the spot; no problem. But the shift from one Christian country to another is significant in spite of what is straightforward and similar on the surface.

While in Tbilisi I met George, a businessman who exports hazelnuts to Europe. After lamenting the lack of North American interest in Nutella, the chocolate hazelnut spread, he answered my questions about Christianity in Georgia and Armenia.

"Orthodox?! The Armenians are not Orthodox. We are different from them. Our church here in Georgia is Orthodox. We have links to the Russian Orthodox Church. They have funny ideas over there. Armenians are heretics. They don't believe in the Trinity. You should be more careful about theology if you go there."

He is right about the Armenian Church not being in line with the kind of Eastern Orthodoxy on display in the Russian or Greek Orthodox churches. But my hazelnut exporter friend was all too quick to dismiss the amazing story of one of the most historic churches in the world. Actually, "the most historic church", as Armenians will tell you.

In Yerevan, I speak with Father Dajad Davidian, a retired priest from Massachusetts who now resides in Armenia helping the church in a variety of ways, notably as resident theologian and visionary at Vem Radio, a new venture in national Christian broadcasting.

"You have this double whammy in the early 20th century," he tells me with no-nonsense Armenian-American flair. "When Turkey carries out the Armenian Genocide [in which between 1.5 and 2 million Armenians were killed] and then Soviet forces invade, swallowing us up into the Soviet Union. Those two blows forced many Armenians to go abroad, greatly enlarging a diaspora that already existed. There are Armenians almost everywhere in the world now."

Davidian goes on to describe how the faith of Armenians has helped them to hold together through not only the troubled 20th century, but also a long history of adversity that stretches back to wars between the Roman and Persian Empires. The Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian language, created in the fifth century by St. Mesrob, a monk, have enabled the survival of a nation without a home for the past 600 years. The declaration of the Republic of Armenia on September 23rd, 1991, inaugurated both a new state and a new era in the history of wandering Armenians.

The Armenian Apostolic Church itself is exceptional. It stands outside of the three major branches of Christianity: Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox. As one of six Oriental Orthodox Churches, Armenian Christians are independent but closely linked to such eastern churches as the Egyptian Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church, among others.

In *The Eastern Orthodox Churches: A Brief Survey*, Ronald Roberson details the intricate differences between these various churches, from the vast expanse of the Russian Orthodox Church to the tiny Assyrian Church of the East. The Oriental Orthodox Christians are renowned for rejecting the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and denying the two undivided natures of Christ, both divine and human. Roberson suggests that what was once regarded as heresy is more and more recognized as "only verbal" disagreement and that "in fact both parties [Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian] profess the same faith in Christ using different formulas."

Father Davidian identifies three distinctive characteristics of



Armenian Orthodoxy. First, Armenian Christians stress the wider community rather than embracing modern Western individualism in the way that Protestantism has done. Second, in the Armenian Apostolic Church worship and liturgy are more important than preaching. Finally, he describes the respect for authority and obedience to elders, which Armenian Christians practice in contrast to Western culture.

"We are in a church that has just awoken from a slumber of 70 years," explains Davidian. "We are rediscovering our faith and we are rebuilding. Under the Communists, the church here developed a fear of change because any change could destroy it. Survival was the key. Those who were religious became superstitious. There was no Christian education. A priest without a beard was seen as a KGB agent. Now we're in the process of re-educating, and yet resources are inadequate to meet the challenges. We need reformation but it won't happen overnight."

Next I visit the office of Thomas Samuelian, a Harvard-educated Armenian-American who practices law in Yerevan and has

tions of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, shows me around the huge complex, including a seminary, the living quarters of the Catholicos, Karekin I (elected in 1995), and the cathedral of Etchmiadzin, which boasts a number of famous icons, among them the spear that pierced the side of Jesus.

Deacon Vazgen highlights the challenges facing the Armenian Apostolic Church. The national government provides little support, financial and otherwise, to the church and even restricts its privileges. Religious groups from the outside, which he called "cults", such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, come into Armenia and entice people away from the national church. The challenge of keeping young people in the church is also prominent.

"The Armenian Church does not have enough money to meet all the needs," he explains. "We have hundreds of church buildings to rebuild and we rely on diaspora money to do that. We can't afford it. We need more priests. It will take time."

Back in Yerevan, the rebuilding proceeds at a more break-

**'The Armenian Church does not have enough money to meet all the needs.**

**We have hundreds of church buildings to rebuild and we rely on diaspora money to do that. We can't afford it. We need more priests. It will take time'**



also translated works by Armenian theologians into English. He is active in leadership in the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Samuelian emphasizes the mystical theology of the Armenian Church as a key distinctive in its identity. "It's a simple version of the faith really," he offers. "It's not legalistic. Armenian theology can be described as mystical. It takes a more spiritual approach to the mystery of God rather than the cognitive and rationalistic focus of the Western church, whether Catholic or Protestant. It's about practical Christianity, everyday stuff. You'll find a serious consideration of such things as prayer and penitence and much less doctrinal or didactic content."

On my second day in Yerevan, I hop aboard a marshutka, mini-buses that keep people zipping throughout the Caucasus, and head 20 minutes outside the city for a visit to Etchmiadzin, the holy see and ancient residence of the Armenian Catholicos (or patriarch). Etchmiadzin is the geographical and leadership centre of Armenian Christianity.

Deacon Vazgen Kesablian, Secretary for Inter-Church Rela-

tion, shows me around the huge complex, including a seminary, the living quarters of the Catholicos, Karekin I (elected in 1995), and the cathedral of Etchmiadzin, which boasts a number of famous icons, among them the spear that pierced the side of Jesus.

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Back in Yerevan, the rebuilding proceeds at a more break-

neck pace. The profusion of cranes marks the outlines of a more prosperous future. Armenians from the diaspora, Canada, the U.S. and Europe — among them, Atom Egoyan, the Canada filmmaker — have returned to visit and more. Real estate prices in Yerevan have doubled in the past few years.

But Armenians will not soon abandon the church and the faith that has stood at the centre of their endangered culture for centuries.

On the marshutka ride back to Tbilisi, Georgia, I talk to Louisa, a 29-year-old Armenian employed by an international development organization doing advocacy work among women. She lived in Chicago for two years while studying.

She tells me she goes to church only a few times a year, on special occasions. But she also speaks of her faith in God. The two American Peace Corps workers she is travelling with seem almost surprised. Then she describes the experience she once had of worshipping in an Armenian church in the U.S. after being away for some time.

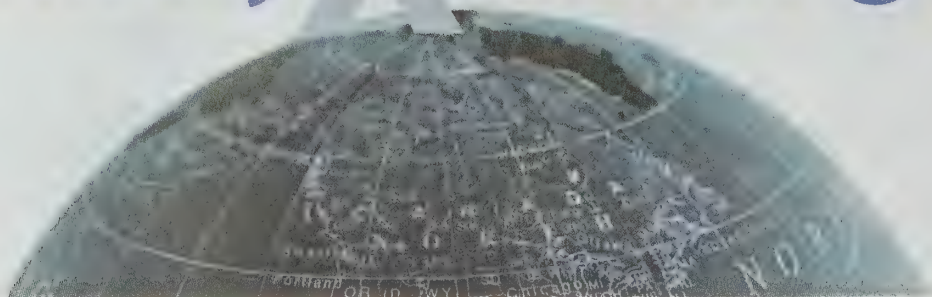
"It was so powerful. I walked in and heard the music in Armenian and it was like I was back home again. I cried and cried. Being in church reminded me of where I come from and who I am. It was so good to be there."

The new and old intermingle freely in Armenia; change alongside continuity. Armenia may no longer be threatened with extinction and the country may be opening up in many ways, but it seems certain that the Christianity that is so deeply embedded in the culture and manifest in the Armenian Apostolic Church will endure well beyond the life-span of recent high-rise developments and high-tech innovations in Yerevan. ✂

Alex MacLeod works with university students and young adults at Knox Church in downtown Toronto.



# ministry X exchange



From February to August, two Presbyterian ministers from opposite sides of the world journeyed to each other's church and home. Rev. Shaun Seaman of Trinity, Kanata, Ont., and Rev. Colin English of St. Paul's, New Zealand, participated in a exchange where one assumes the other's role in church. Homes and vehicles are also exchanged.

The process is facilitated by International Ministry Exchanges, an organization originally created by a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA). IME offers its services free

of charge. It distributes information, gathers applications, links possible exchange partners, and helps with the paperwork needed for such cross-border endeavours. The home congregation still provides the stipend for its own minister. Expenses are generally paid for by the congregation and/or minister.

Below are two stories about time spent in a foreign country, a foreign congregation, and the benefits such an experience can yield.

To find out more, visit [www.ministry-exchanges.org](http://www.ministry-exchanges.org).



## SAME ISSUES, DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

*New Zealand minister reflects on his time in Canada*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Experiencing a sunrise Easter service while the ground was covered with snow is not the only thing Rev. Colin English will take back to his New Zealand parish. He'll tell stories about the people he met in Canada, the welcoming arms of his host congregation, and the realization that the Presbyterian churches in Canada and New Zealand wrestle with similar issues. "It was great to be able to observe what's happening in society on a political level, in particular with same-sex marriage. It's similar to the issues at home," said English, speaking from Trinity, Kanata, Ont. "And I read about reparation with First Nations peoples and coming to grips with things that happened in the past."



Rev. Colin English and his wife travelled from New Zealand to Ontario for a ministerial exchange.

On exchange since February, the Napier, New Zealand resident said it was helpful to get a larger country's perspective on the world. "Since we're a smaller country – New Zealand only has about four million people – we're a bit more isolated than Canada. So it's good to see the experiences of one of our sister churches." He also realized that being a larger country can have its drawbacks. "A large country has the danger of possibly becoming a bit insular," he said. "This may apply a bit more to the United States, but there's so much happening in the country itself that perhaps there's less awareness of the rest of the world and the life of the church."

As a minister of 23 years, English said it's important to remember that time spent in the host parish is not a time for big changes and leaving one's mark on the congregation. "I went in with the attitude that I'm just one person, and I'll bring some differences along with me, but I'm not here to initiate changes. I'm the guest and it's an educational time," he said. "If they remain themselves, I can learn from them. If I'm myself and use my usual approach, then hopefully that's of some benefit to them too."

He said the age of the congregation at Trinity is younger

than St. Paul's, and their style of worship is different, with a lot more praise-type songs. Despite these differences, he commented that Canadians are fairly similar to New Zealanders, demonstrating a "certain amount of understatement in the life of the church and the wider community." English said the best thing about his trip has been the people. "They become your friends. Everything on top of that is a bonus."

Before going on exchange to Canada, English and his wife travelled to Oregon in 1999 to do a short exchange at a PC(USA) congregation there. He enjoyed his time there also, but wishes it could have been longer. The six months he spent in Canada enabled him more time to learn, reflect and truly experience Canadian culture. "I've enjoyed the climate!" he said. "It was great to see that picturesque, fairy tale-like blanket of snow. Although we only had it for about six weeks – if we had four months of it, we might have started going a little stir crazy!"

He commended the idea of ministry exchange to his colleagues. "It's important for my parish to hear a voice that's different than mine; to experience a different approach," he said. "But it's also good for the minister – to step out of your home patch and see how other churches are functioning."



## **SAME ISSUES, DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

*Ministry exchange has led to a renewal of family*

BY SHAUN SEAMAN

**R**eluctantly, we are acknowledging that our time in Napier New Zealand is too quickly coming to an end. This is our second Ministry Exchange experience, and as before, it has been a tremendous blessing to our family and to our ministry.

Arranging for an exchange is a couple of years in the making. Approval from Session and Presbytery are essential of course, but the time consuming aspect is finding someone from the country in which you want to exchange who wants to exchange for the same period of time during the same part of the year; comes from a congregation in which you would have theological compatibility; would be helpful to your congregation; and comes from a ministry (urban, rural or downtown) that would be comfortable in your ministry setting and vice versa. There is always at least one magazine in most countries in which you could place an advertisement for an exchange, and/or you can always send your letter of interest in this regard to the various Presbyteries in your country of interest.

At this point in this exchange, I can say, that for me, it has been most helpful on two fronts. Firstly, what this experience has done for our family is immeasurable. To travel to the other side of the world with our children, Eben, 16, Logan, 14, and Hannah, 12, has provided an education that will be with them forever. We touched down in Anchorage just to re-fuel, but spent 4 eye-opening days in Hong Kong, to which we will gladly return on our way home. Our time in

New Zealand has been life changing for all of us. The spectacular beauty of this country, the differences in language, customs, culture... everything, big and small has been an education for us all. Intentionally, the children have not been enrolled in NZ schools while we were here. At home, like far too many Canadian families, our lives are lived in the rush of a hurricane! My wife, Heather, and I compare day-timers... who is taking who where, when, how? The kids rush from school, to sports, music, church, friends... We seemed to be unable or unwilling to slow things down. The difference that this change in venue and pace has made on our family has been remarkable. Slowing life down, having time for each other, exploring and discovering new things together and simply having unscheduled time together has done things for our family I never thought possible.

What has been disturbing about the trip is discovering the ill health of the PCNZ. National Staff are being let go and buildings used to house national staff are being sold. Homes for seniors that were once owned by various arms of the church are being sold. Church attendance on the whole is diminishing and those congregations that are still surviving are scrambling to find ways to grow and establish the foundation for a future.

I cannot recommend heartily enough, the benefits of a ministry exchange- for clergy, their families, for both congregations involved, and for the church worldwide. We will return home, renewed, refreshed, and connected to some amazing new friends who worship God in another hemisphere. ☺



## SEEKING THE ANCIENT PATHS

Three teenagers honour their spiritual parents

**I**n Chinese culture there is great reverence for old age. The Jewish commandment, "Honour your father and your mother" finds special resonance here.

What have the old to teach the young? Three teenagers at Montreal Chinese congregation interviewed some of their elders. This is what they learned:

### MR. AND MRS. LAI-WING HUM

by Jason Chu

Three young couples were married this summer — a great event in the life of a small congregation. At Chinese New Year, the congregation presented them with gifts.

At the same time, six other couples were invited on stage. All of them had been married for 50 years and more — one couple for 66 years!

The ceremony was designed not only to honour the six older couples but also to encourage those soon to be married by their example and words. Each one spoke movingly of their experiences and what marriage meant to them.

Mr. Lai-Wing and Mrs. Kim Hum celebrated their 51st anniversary last year. They were very young when they married but at their first meeting quickly recognized they had many things in common.

While the Hums believe that both husband and wife are equal in marriage, the husband is still the leader of the family and the wife still needs to do house duties. They must have a good relationship with their children and they must grow and learn together with them. Financial planning is important, as is a good education. And then, this message for teenagers and young adults: not only should you marry a Christian but one who is mature in the faith.

I learned a lot about marriage from both Mr. and Mrs. Hum. For me, it is very important to choose the right person



James Wing's 1923 head tax certificate.

and that she be a good Christian. It will be the greatest moment of my life!

### MISS RITA DE PIERRO by Kirsten Pawl

The Montreal Chinese Presbyterian Church has a very special organist. She is over 90 years of age and although she does not speak or understand Chinese, Sunday by Sunday, she plays for the services — unpaid!

Miss De Pierro's father was the minister of the Italian Presbyterian Church here in Montreal and from the age of nine, Rita played for his services.

All her life she has been a church organist and when the congregation of McVicar Memorial closed and Chinese moved in, she asked the minister if she could continue to play the organ from time to time. She was told she could play "any time, even on Sundays!"

That was in 1994 and she has been playing ever since. On the Sundays when the Montreal Marathon shuts down the buses, Rita De Pierro walks!

When she was a teenager, Miss De Pierro read the Bible every day, committing many of its verses to memory. During the interview, she quoted two of her favourites, word for word — verses that spoke of living "no longer to ourselves," and our duty to do everything "for the Lord... with all our heart."

From talking with Rita De Pierro, I learned that she doesn't need a pat on the back. She is serving not our church but

God — with all her heart. We should never be concerned about what is in it for us and never ask for anything in return. Life is about what you can do for others. We can all learn from this.

### MR. JAMES WING by Sara Lina Wing

James Wing is my grandfather and the senior elder of the congregation, who came to Canada in 1923 at the age of 11. He was compelled by the Canadian government to pay a head tax of \$500 in order to stay in the country, as were most Chinese people.

I asked him if he encountered much prejudice in those early days because he was Chinese. Not when he was a boy, but as he grew older, there were people who would not speak to him because of his race and many Canadian companies refused to hire Chinese workers. The head tax in his estimation was a great wrong. The government taxed no other race and has yet to redress this injustice. The Chinese church in Montreal, on the other hand, provided a source of community and helped him feel less isolated. Above all, the church taught him to rely on God during hard times. When asked what advice he had for the congregation today, elder Wing said he would encourage families to attend church regularly, paying special attention to their children. Adults should seek positions of leadership when they are young, teaching Sunday school and assisting with visitation and outreach.

"You are my grandfather," I said, "what lessons would you like me to learn from your life?"

"It is extremely important for you, Sara, to build up a strong faith so that you will be able to rely on it during difficult times." ☞

The authors were assisted by Gwendolin Basham Lam, English ministry worker and J.S.S. Armour, Interim-Moderator, Montreal Chinese.



# Lessons in courage

*Fighting back fear to bring peace to the world*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

## Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams

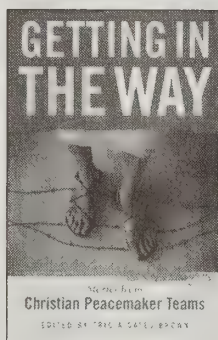
Tricia Gates Brown, ed.

Herald Press

Christian Peacemaker Teams operate around the world, showing solidarity with those in the midst of war and upheaval. They advocate for human rights, speak with extremist groups and preach peace amongst chaos. It was created in 1988. Since then, teams have worked in Iraq, Palestine, Mexico, Haiti, North America and Colombia. Their motto, Getting in the Way, has enabled them to do Christ's work in the world's most heated conflict zones.

It was with some interest then that I read the first-hand accounts from peacemakers in Colombia and elsewhere. The intimate, honest, inspiring stories are told in a concise, yet detailed manner, launching the reader into war torn Iraq, Palestinian settlements in Hebron and contested aboriginal land in Northern Ontario. Fierce determination and courageous acts abound in the name of peace. As evidenced in the book's pages, peacemakers are people who "talk to soldiers, guerillas and paramilitaries, accompany school children and farmers, advocate for human rights, support local initiatives in nonviolence, and disseminate reports of what they witness." They are "ordinary people with big hearts and a passion for justice achieved nonviolently."

They live in the midst of conflict — sometimes their presence alone helps calm the turbulence. Although their acts are brave, fear sometimes finds a way of creeping in. Before leaving for Baghdad, one peacemaker writes, "When I decided to join CPT, I generally accepted the idea of laying down my



life for peace. But am I ready to do that now? Am I prepared to embrace whatever happens, regardless of what that may be? I force myself to admit it: I am afraid." Instilling fear in others is the main weapon used by guerillas and paramilitaries in Colombia, where a brutal civil war (known as the "dirty war") has been raging for decades. Through fear these groups exert control over entire communities. While living in Barrancabermeja, a paramilitary-controlled city where "anyone working for peace is a target," one peacemaker tells of banishing such fear, as well as dealing with her own. "The Bible says again and again that we

are not to be afraid, for God is with us," she writes. And yet, "Fear lurked behind every corner."

"Fear is still present in my life, but I am learning to accept it so that I can choose to hope. I am finding that embracing my fears somehow liberates me from them. Jesus' words to his fearful disciples, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' remain a deep challenge as I struggle to be faithful to God. But I know I do not struggle alone."

Although punctuated by leftist sentiment, *Getting in the Way* is an eye-opening collection of stories told by the people who know them best. It's a good read for Christians interested in social justice, as well as those who simply want to learn more about how God seems to be working in this world. It will leave you wondering if you have the guts to be a peacemaker. ✂

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# Sacraments are not negotiable

*Latest legal and liberal fashions are no excuse for destroying the church*

This summer NDP MPs Charlie Angus and Joe Comartin claimed to have been deeply hurt by the Roman Catholic Church. The first was told that he could not receive communion. The latter has been prevented from teaching marriage classes in his local church.

The reason is that both men actively supported and voted for the government's same-sex marriage legislation. One would have hoped they would have the courage of their convictions and realized they could not simultaneously hold two mutually contradictory views.

It really is quite extraordinary that politicians who want to make revolutionary changes to the nature of family and culture should then complain when one of the bastions of that family and culture, the Roman Catholic Church, tries to defend itself.

The real issue is why Joe Comartin was allowed to teach about Catholic marriage in the first place and why Charlie Angus wasn't denied communion earlier.

I happen to know Comartin and he is a profoundly decent man. I have no reason to think otherwise of Charlie Angus. But decency is hardly the point. There are many decent Jews, Muslims and atheists, but they are similarly unqualified to teach Catholic ideas or receive the Catholic eucharist because, yes, they reject Catholic beliefs.

Marriage is regarded within Catholicism as a sacrament and as such as the very epicenter of Catholicism. To want to distort the sacrament of marriage is akin to distorting any other sacrament. Like, for example, a person who claimed to be Catholic but denied that Jesus was present during the sacrifice of the mass.



**Nobody is forcing any person to be a Catholic but it might be nice if various MPs did not try to force Catholics to be something else**

If you don't believe it, move on. But don't criticize the Catholic Church for being Catholic.

Actually the Roman Catholic Church allows all sorts of disagreement. It positively encourages it in many circumstances and has founded numerous schools and universities where debate is made possible.

So a Catholic can, for example, support the war in Iraq, contrary to the Vatican position. Can support the death penalty, contrary to the Vatican position. Can be opposed to forgiving Third World debt, contrary to the Vatican position.

They could also differ from the church on issues of celibate clergy and all sorts of vital subjects. But within Catholic thought there are some non-negotiables. And humanity's openness to life is one of them.

Yet one does not have to be Catholic to realize that the gay marriage issue is not about two people loving one another, about human rights or about equality. It is about each individual being open to God's plan for creation and being open to life.

Sex between people of the same gen-

der can by its very nature never result in new life and is in the final analysis a selfish act. It becomes an end in itself and never a means to that most glorious of ends, God-given life.

Even if the parties involved are in love, their love is not rooted in creation and in God's exquisite plan for his creatures. Again, you don't have to believe this. But to be a Catholic in good standing you do. As for many within various other denominations, I'm no longer entirely sure.

This does not mean we stop loving homosexuals, or even confused NDP

MPs, but it must mean that we do not expect the Catholic Church to destroy a sacrament for the sake of the latest legal and liberal fashion of charter equality.

Nobody is forcing any person to be a Catholic but it might be nice if various MPs did not try to force Catholics to be something else.

It is at heart a case of pride. The teachings of Jesus Christ, of the disciples and apostles, of the early church fathers and doctors and of the deposit of faith contained within the catechism are all less important to some alleged Catholics than their own opinions.

One last point, exposing deep hypocrisy. An NDP MP who voted against party policy on same-sex marriage was demoted, has been widely attacked by party members and is in danger of losing the party's official support.

This is for disobeying Jack Layton. Surely the consequences are a little more serious when one disobeys God. Just a thought. ✂

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Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# The stuff we leave behind

*It's not the preaching but the doing that makes a legacy*

Well, I finally did it. After years of checking out prices, I finally talked myself into buying one. After years of admiring those tiny leaves and gnarled branches, I mustered up the courage to bring one home. It sits in my living room window now. Soaking up the sun's rays. Reaching out for moisture. And growing... ever so slowly.

I didn't know they existed until I watched a movie called *The Karate Kid*. The wise old master pruned and wired and clipped away, then one day presented a lonely and mistreated boy with an ancient tree 10 inches tall. The tree spoke to the boy of endurance, of perseverance, of growth — things he would need to bring the movie to a happy end. Since then, I've wanted a bonsai tree for myself. But they looked too much like work (all that wiring and clipping). They looked too much like money (some were as much as \$1,000). A few months ago, however, I found a small one for only 16 dollars and it made no sense to leave it in the store.

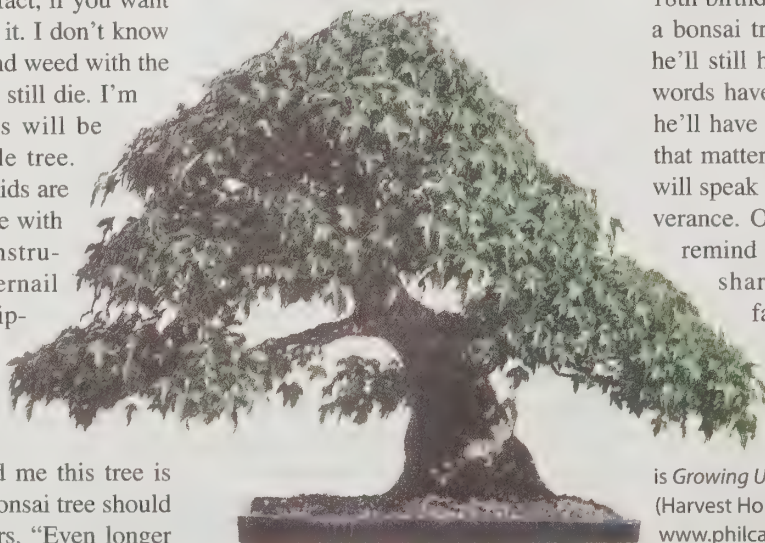
Please understand that I wasn't born with a green thumb. In fact, if you want to kill a plant, let me at it. I don't know what it is. I can water and weed with the best of them, but plants still die. I'm determined that things will be different with this little tree. Some nights, after the kids are tucked in, you'll find me with the perfect pruning instrument (my wife's fingernail clippers), carefully snipping, trimming, and wiring until it's all I can see when I close my eyes.

If the lady who sold me this tree is right, a well cared for bonsai tree should last a few hundred years. "Even longer

than me," I told her. So I'll keep snipping, trimming, and wiring, and perhaps this tree will be around long after I've hung up the fingernail clippers. Of course, I'd like to leave behind a little more than a gnarled old tree, but after a story I heard this morning, I'm wondering what could be more important.

Just last summer, an acquaintance of mine took his 12-year-old son on a weekend fishing trip. The purpose was to teach the boy the facts of life. To let him know of the wonderful joys of married love. "Sex is a gift from God to be celebrated and saved for the one you marry," he told his son, as they stood waist-deep in a crystal clear stream, casting flies after rainbow trout.

**Some nights, after the kids are tucked in, you'll find me with the perfect pruning instrument (my wife's fingernail clippers), carefully snipping, trimming, and wiring until it's all I can see when I close my eyes**



The boy had no reason to doubt him. Not until a month later, when his dad walked out the front door with the same suitcase he'd taken on that fishing trip. He left behind a devastated family. He left behind the awful truth: For over a year he'd been having an affair with a married woman. His boy may never be the same.

Since I heard the news, I've been thinking about the stuff we leave behind. You see, whether we like it or not, the impact we make is rarely determined by the words we say, but by the life we live. Those who affect us most are not those who preach to us, but those who live their lives quietly, gracefully and faithfully, like the stars in the heavens.

Later this week, I'm going back to that store. I'm going to buy three more bonsai trees. One for each of my kids. Perhaps years from now in some far off place, they'll be able to look at a bonsai tree basking in their living room window and think of their dad.

My son Stephen is eleven now. Going on twelve. Soon be eighteen. On his 18th birthday I plan to present him with a bonsai tree. Long after that birthday, he'll still have that tree. Long after my words have stopped ringing in his ears, he'll have a small reminder of the stuff that mattered to me. I pray that the tree will speak to him of character. Of perseverance. Of faithfulness. I hope it will remind him that although I had my share of twists and bends, his father grew strong and faithful. Under the caring hand of the Master. *PCA*

Phil Callaway's latest novel is *Growing Up on the Edge of the World* (Harvest House). Check it out at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com).

# Seek and ye shall find

*By asking the right question, a congregation finds mission possible*

BY MARY PAT ELLIOTT

**H**ow do we love others? That's the question we at Knox, Wallaceburg, Ont., asked ourselves. Motivated by our church's mission statement of Here We Grow In Christ, we were challenged by our minister's recent proclamation that church is "all about relationships — relationship with God, His Son, the Holy Spirit and other people." We informally adopted this new commandment, reflecting Jesus' thoughts on the most important call for Christians. Through this call to serve others, Christ opened our understanding to the truth that loving God and others is what gives life its purpose.

When one of our members described the impact of participating in mission trips at his home congregation of Knox, Toronto, our church's Christian education worker accepted the challenge. Ellen Sands organized a small inter-denominational team who travelled to Bixby, Oklahoma, to help construct a church/training college for aboriginals.

Experiences there led some team members to accept other short-term mission assignments. Four from the congregation worked with Active Christians with a Mission, an organization of the River City Vineyard Church, Sarnia, Ont. They teamed up with the New York School of Urban Ministry combining work in the soup kitchens and food banks with evangelism on the streets of Harlem.

ACWAM encouraged me as convenor of Knox' Mission and Outreach Committee, to accept the position of sponsorship coordinator for two Christian schools and two orphanages in Haiti. Our entire church joined in to support these children. I am part of a team of four women (Pentecostal, Pres-



Marg Furtah and Mary Pat Elliott hold the Haitian baby their church sponsors.





Wallaceberg's 'holy cow' with, from left, Clerk of Session Carl Maclean, Mary Pat Elliott and the cow donor, Wayne Robertson.

byterian, Roman Catholic and United) who provide photos and updates on these orphaned children to their sponsor families.

These families contribute \$30 a month to provide food and daily care for the orphanage's 120 children until they are adopted by their "forever families" in Canada and other countries. Families at Knox support 12 orphans. Our church family supports a baby named Lovely through our Lenten offerings. Many of the children are delivered to the orphanages by their own mothers who realize that their children's only hope of eating depends on this mission.

Not content with this outreach alone, three women sought to provide clothes for the Haitian children and began meeting once a week to sew clothes, diapers and bed sheets. Out of that initiative, 13 women from several churches now meet as the Stitchers of Hope. People in our community donate money and fabric. It is not unusual to see a bag of fabric, donated anonymously,

hanging from the church's doors.

As evidenced by our multi-denominational mission projects, ecumenism is alive and well in our region of south-western Ontario. The daily vacation Bible school held as a half-day program during one week in the summer is a collaboration of the Baptist, Presbyterian and independent Pentecostal churches. We also held a March break camp this year, where the attendance was double our expectations. Our summer program will expand this year into two one-week day camps directed by Rev. Jason Cartier of U-Turn Ministries – our community's inter-denominational youth outreach ministry.

The Salvation Army Red Shield campaign and the collection of donations via the kettles at Christmas time are also supported by many different churches. Members of virtually every congregation in town, including our own, assist both of these programs. On top of these, one of Knox's members volunteers in the daily operations of

the local Salvation Army Thrift Store.

Knox also helps the Salvation Army by providing meat for the food bank – an always-needed supply. Many families are struggling in this community of 11,000 which has felt the loss of about 1,500 jobs in the last 15 years. God has allowed the congregation at Knox to help where we can. Thanks to the generosity of a cattle producer in nearby Dresden, we have launched what we've dubbed our "holy cow project." The farmer donates the cow and our congregation pays for the cutting and processing which costs about \$350 to \$500. The meat goes to the food bank, as well as families we know who are struggling.

Through these various mission projects in our own community and in the world, we as a congregation pray that we honour Christ, living in the truth that life is about our relationship with God and the people He created. ✠

Mary Pat Elliott is convener of Knox' Mission and Outreach Committee.

# More prayer, fewer committees

*Now, there are a few things that he needs get off his chest*

BY MILFRED HARPER

In the April *Record* Ms. Eileen Shaw of Hamilton said in a letter that we need a more openness to worship and prayer. I agree with her on this point because when we open our hearts and minds in worship, we automatically become closer to Jesus Christ. Now there is one thing that really bothers me: should a change take place in our worship, will we automatically start up yet another committee for change, because this will burn out the people who are already on committees or will we automatically go to prayer?

Now prayer is defined as a solemn and humble approach to the divinity in word or thought which involves "petition, confession, praise and thanksgiving" (Webster's). So, let us forget all these committees and have everyone in the church start a prayer group. This way we would get to know everyone in the church.

Now there will be some people who are not interested in prayer so it would be up to the others in church to up-hold the people who do not want to attend. We humans forget that God holds all the power in His hands. Only God can make the changes in the churches; but we must be the instruments of that work.

Now, I find the new hymnbook difficult to sing and worship from. When you sing a hymn it should be done with an attitude of prayer and whether the hymns be fast paced or slow, we are still worshipping God. But, it is hard to worship God when you are trying to stumble through the words and music.

Another thing we are lacking is sermons on salvation, justification and sanctification. I heard a sermon one time about the floors of the church and the generations that either walked down the aisle or wheeled down the aisle. True it is nice to have a story once in a while, but we must face reality.

Prayers are not allowed in many schools and people in hospitals sometimes don't have a bible in the drawer. The world is on a course with Satan.

I give thanks to God for the Roman Catholic school system which still believes in prayers and supplication. Our televisions, media and radio are full of sex, and drugs yet where is the church and even more, where are we? Parents think it is more important to get little Timmy to the skating rink on Sunday rather than to Sunday school.

Also there should be preaching about Christ's second coming because Jesus stated when he went to the cross, he would return. Or do we just reserve that particular statement for Easter?

In conclusion, we look at two types of Christians. Those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ through salvation and those who only go to church on Sunday. Something to think about. ✠



Milfred Harper does freelance writing and attends St. Paul's, Kemptville, Ont. He holds his certificate at Woodroffe Temple, Salvation Army in Ottawa. He is involved with seniors' prayer group at Woodroffe Temple as well as community care ministry. He does some chaplain work with the Christian Pipers and Drummers Assoc. and has been healed twice from cancer and heart surgery.

Opinions expressed in this column are not those of the *Presbyterian Record* but of the author.



# Old tosh and balderdash

*Earnest critics keep The Da Vinci Code alive*

BY ANDREW FAIZ

**T**he *Da Vinci Code* juggernaut continues unabated. It has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over two years, is about to be a movie and has spawned several new sub-genres in publishing. Where to begin talking about this phenomenon?

Let's start with the movie: Sister Mary Michael of Our Lady's Community of Peace and Mercy in Lincoln, England, protested outside the Anglican cathedral where some scenes were shot.

Sister Mary told journalists that her actions were "intended to make a reparation to God for the blasphemy that was taking place." This blasphemy is multi-fold. First there's the book itself, which accuses the Vatican of conspiracy to suppress the truth about Christ's mission. And then, there are the Anglicans who have accepted money from the filmmakers. She said, "the church should not accept money for something that was not a true story and that instead its members should be praying more for funds to arrive."

The filmmakers apparently paid £100,000 for the privilege of filming inside the cathedral. Sister Mary has interpreted this as Anglicans buying pardons. The dean of the cathedral, Very Rev. Alec Knight, described "*The Da Vinci Code* as a 'load of old tosh' and 'balderdash.'" He further argues, that "the allegation of simony, or buying pardons, was not valid, because simony meant the buying or selling of ecclesiastical preferment."

In journalism this is called keeping the story alive. Often the very same people — like Sister Mary — that want a news story to die are responsible for giving it extra lift.

*The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown, is a popcorn book, sloppily written but

tightly plotted, that regurgitates stories about the "true Christ" that have been circulating for two thousand years. It was a fun read but lacked both the poetic and the mythic beauty of the Gospels. There are better reads in the post-*Da Vinci*

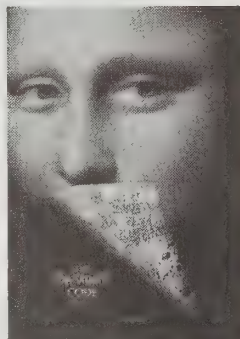
genre — *The Eight* by Katherine Neville and *The Rule of Four* by Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason to name two.

Both are well-written, engaging thrillers in which ancient secrets are coded inside works of art. The church, of course, is involved in suppressing the secret that threatens its moral and spiritual authority. Both books try to distance themselves from *Da Vinci*, making certain to assert they are not cheap knock-offs, while at the same time riding its coattails. They, like the cathedral dean, are not merely praying for more funds to arrive — Dan Brown's wake has provided them the funds they need.

They too keep the story alive, through their own self-interest. But, they can't touch the sheer cultural power of Brown's book. It's this very power that has given birth to another sub-genre: the *Da Vinci* debunking books. The one by James L. Garlow and Peter Jones is subtitled, "You've read the fiction, now read the facts."

I read their book and am still seeking the facts: Brown claims Mary Magdalene was not a prostitute but Jesus' wife and the rock upon which he built the church. And that she is the true Holy Grail — which is a sexual/spiritual pun.

According to the Gospels, Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary and then she shows up at his crucifixion and becomes one of three women to anoint him and is



the first person he meets after his resurrection.

The debunking authors acknowledge "any reference to Mary Magdalene as a prostitute does not come from the Bible." And state there is no evidence Jesus was ever married. As to the

Holy Grail? "The real church, made up of forgiven sinners from every gender, race, nation, and socioeconomic group, is the spiritual Holy Grail."

So, apparently their idea of fact is to assert pop theology. That's cute; but all it does is keep the story alive. Since they are unconvincing in their argument, Brown seems stronger.

I suppose I too am keeping the story alive, but unlike the debunkers or Sister Mary, *The Da Vinci Code* does not scare me. I don't believe Christianity is threatened by this book, the movie to come, its imposters or its supporters. If anything, Christianity is threatened by Sister Mary and the theological fact checkers because they insist on treating it as weak and vulnerable. They are not listening to the phenomenon, nor understanding the real criticism made by the book — that the institution of the church defends itself only, not the word of God. Nor are they paying heed to the millions who seek spiritual answers after reading the book. Instead, in their earnestness they keep the wrong story alive, while slowly killing the true story. ☞

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Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the *Record*. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca). This column and all other editorial material in the magazine are available at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).

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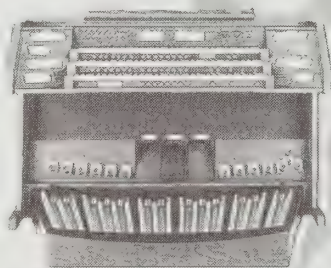
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# Smelly Christians

*Our faith will always 'hang a little stank' in the world*

BY DAVID WEBBER



The old girl came out onto the power line about a thousand metres down wind from me. She just sort of popped out of the brush and was suddenly there in my binoculars. She was not alone. Her young cub of six months was comically gamboling along beside her as she ambled determinedly, in typical black bear fashion, down the edge of the power line towards me.

I happened to be there on an assignment that was exclusively venison oriented. Black bear was definitely not on the agenda, doubly so because of the cub. But I was delighted she had shown

up. Long ago I learned that hunting imitates life in that the best stuff is what happens while you are trying to make something else happen. And so I sat back to enjoy what was happening in my binoculars.

I knew that she could not see me, even at 1,000 metres. Black Bears (*Ursus americanus*) are noted for their myopic vision. However, they are also noted for their tremendous sense of smell and hearing. The hearing and eyesight I could control by sitting absolutely still. But the sense of smell and the slight breeze blowing from me to her; well only time would tell.

At about 800 metres the large old sow veered from her path along the edge of the power line right-of-way, turned 90 degrees and headed straight to one of the large power poles in the middle. Without hesitation she strode purposefully up to the pole and stood up on her hind legs to her full height. Turning her back she leaned against the power pole and in perfect Disney-like fashion, she moved up and down on her hind legs and gave herself the most vicious back rub I have ever witnessed any species take pleasure in. Her joy complete, she then turned around on her hind legs and gave the power pole a





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**'I must smell down right putrid to that old she bear to construct  
an invisible odiferous wall around myself like that'**

powerful embrace that would have popped the eyes out of any living thing. Then, she pivoted 90 degrees and went right back to where she left off in her journey towards me at the edge of the right of way, the cub skipping along beside her like a hyperactive pup.

At about 600 metres distance, she stopped at the edge of a trickle creek and she and the cub helped themselves to a salad of dandelion greens and new grass shoots. Satisfied with the appetizer, she resumed towards me, obviously looking for a main course, which at this time of year in this neck of the woods usually consists of ripe, frost-sweetened wild rose hips.

At about 500 metres the old she bear ran nose first into a glass wall. She literally hit something invisible, recoiled, wheeled around abruptly and sprinted off the power line, pasting her cub in the seat of the pants to get him moving as she ran by. I put down my binoculars, lifted my armpits and sniffed self-consciously, sort of like I sometimes do when I fear my body odour might have offended someone.

"Well I'll be danged!" I said to the

rough looking raven who had been scrutinizing the she bear and me from atop a big Douglas Fir snag with the hope that something digestible would come out of our encounter. "I must smell down right putrid to that old she bear to construct an invisible odiferous wall around myself like that." The old raven laughed at me and swooped off in search of more certain delectable outcomes. I was left alone with my thoughts.

And I thought mostly about how I smelled. I had just been reading the apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He writes: "In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation — an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us more like the stench from a rotting corpse." (2 Cor 2: 14-16)

Paul seems to be saying that whether I know it or not, as a Christian, I smell. I find smell is a helpful image for de-



scribing being a faithful Christian. It means that whether I say anything or not, do anything or not, think anything or not, I am never anonymous as a Christian. Hiding out is not even an option. Christian presence is as pervasive as odour. So why would I spend any time or energy trying to hide out in my society? Why would I waste any energy trying to live undercover? As I live a faithful Christian life in a multicultural cosmopolitan world I am going to smell, and I am going to “hang a little stank” on everybody and everything I rub up against. I am going to stand out and people are going to notice. It is just part of being an authentic Christian, part of being a faithful Christ-bearer. This is a liberating thought for me, one that encourages a healthy ‘let it all hang out’ approach to living a faithful life for Christ in my world.

Part of being a faithful Christian also means, that to God, I will always smell sweet. To those who are in the process of being touched by God’s saving ways I will reek of the good smell of life. But there will be some who will recoil at the very scent of Christ on me. They will hit the invisible wall and run. I will always offend some when I live for Christ. I will offend some outside the church and I will offend some inside the church. That’s just the way it is. This too is a liberating reality. There is not much sense in running myself ragged trying to never offend anyone as I live for Christ, when it is inevitable that some are always going to be offended; some extremely so.

Smelly Christians, faithful Christians, don’t have to worry about issues of anonymity nor offensiveness, just faithfulness. Our one job is to be true to our following after Christ and authentic in bearing him in the world. I find this one job to be a do-able thing, with the help of God of course. It is the running away to find a protective anonymity on the one hand and the slaving away to please everyone on the other that worries and tires me to hell. ☺

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.



A young boy with his backpack filled with notebooks, pencils and math tools received as part of the tsunami rehabilitation program supported by PWS&D.

## Back to School

In the community of Edavanakad, in the Indian state of Kerala, it is time for a new beginning. March 31 was a special day for the small fishing community, as the Churches Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) distributed school materials — backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils and math tools, lunchboxes and umbrellas for the upcoming monsoon season — to the children in Edavanakad and other tsunami affected villages. It was time to go back to school, time for new hope. The distribution of school materials is one way CASA is helping rebuild lives in India with the support of PWS&D and other Action by Churches Together (ACT) members around the world. Now, we are helping the villagers rebuild their homes — stronger and better than the old ones.

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# Keeping ministry healthy and whole

*Presbytery of Grey-Bruce-Maitland*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



**C**omprised mostly of small churches in rural areas or small towns, the Presbytery of Grey-Bruce-Maitland's outreach projects epitomize small-town living and the closeness, cooperation and interdependency found among the residents there. "It took me a while to sort of find my way here," said Rev. Jeremy Sanderson, presbytery clerk and minister at Knox, Walkerton. "Since then, they've been the greatest bunch of people in the way they relate to each other and support one another. It's a really great place to be."

Such support helps a lot in a presbytery as large as Grey-Bruce-Maitland. Its 27 charges (12 of which are dual or multi-point for a total of 40 congregations) are spread over a fairly large area, covering inland rural landscapes, as well as lakeshore living and summer cottage communities. The presbytery's ties to the community and to the churches within its bounds help it remain vibrant, despite challenges with dwindling numbers.

"There's been a huge turn-over in

ministers in the last five years," said Sanderson, who noted that many ministers come to the presbytery for their first call, but quickly move on. "We're desperate to get more people into the presbytery. There aren't enough ministers or church-goers."

There are currently six vacancies, and membership dropped by about 4,200 between 2002 and 2003. Still, the small size doesn't hinder generosity. Knox, Stokes Bay, was created as a summer mission field about 50 years ago. The town quadruples in size during the summer months as city dwellers race to the tranquil shores of Lake Huron. However, Sanderson said the church serves a small group of dedicated parishioners who live in the area year-round. "They're the most generous people," he said, recounting their response to a local family whose home went up in flames. The congregation raised money to help with the loss. "They're incredibly warm and supportive."

St. Andrew's, Chatsworth, a town of

about 400 people, is known as the community church that stages events and runs programs. People from the community as well as church-goers come to their study groups, Alpha courses and marriage prep courses. Bill Vanderstelt, minister at St. Andrew's, said the benefits of the programs are two-fold. "We're nurturing the faith of the people here so they're comfortable inviting others out," he said.

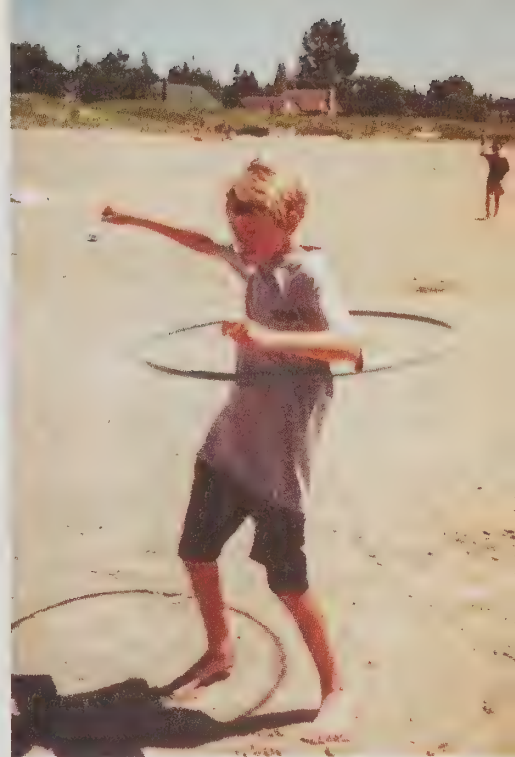
Knox, Walkerton, has a unique situation in that there are seven denominations in a town of 4,500. This ecumenical spirit gives churches an opportunity to work together. Knox participates in the Walk of Witness, something the town's churches organize each year, where they march through the town and preach in each other's pulpits. Between 500 and 600 people attend. "We all work side by side," said Sanderson.

St. Andrew's, Owen Sound, is a bit of an anomaly in the presbytery. With more than 500 members, a morning and evening service, three full-time staff and a minister who has been associated with the church for 21 years, the church doesn't exactly reflect the others. (Other large congregations with about 200 members each include Durham, Knox, Meaford, and Knox, Tiverton). However, it continues the presbytery's tradition of reaching out to the community. When the Salvation Army could no longer run its soup kitchen, several churches, led by St. Andrew's, joined together to carry on the vital service.

Because Owen Sound (population 22,000) houses a large number of retirees, the church hired a parish nurse. Bev Wilkins gives a few hours of her time each week to tend to the physical and mental needs of St. Andrew's older



**Mud, hoops and suds at Huron Feathers, Sauble Beach.**



congregants as well as the increasing number of homeless people who come into the church from off the street. "Living in a retirement community is a reality we deal with," said Ted Creen, senior minister at St. Andrew's and one of the presbytery's stalwarts. "Our parish nurse listens to them and gives support. It's a necessity in our community."

The presbytery is also dedicated to serving youth and families. Huron Feathers Presbyterian Centre on Sauble Beach began as a youth drop-in centre in the 1960s and now offers a coffee house, hostel, summer camp, swimming instruction, Bible studies and relaxed Sunday worship. Often run by student pastors, a board of directors oversees its operations. It is an initiative of the presbytery and the Synod of Southwestern Ontario. The pew-less interior, walls decorated with children's art, coffee and sweets served mid-service and a view of the crashing waves from the pulpit create a playful, casual, open environment. Formally a summer mission field, it has operated as a year-round place of worship for the last six years, mostly because it is the only Presbyterian church for miles. "We're quite proud of it," said Sanderson. And although its most recent student pastor is moving onto an ordained position in Toronto, the good work at Huron Feathers won't cease. "We're not

giving it up," he said.

At St. Andrew's, Chatsworth, they team up with the congregation's sister church, Latona, Dornoch, as well as the local Baptist church to host S.T.A.G.E. — a community youth group committed to Seek, Trust, Acknowledge, Grow and Evangelize. Rev. Bill Vanderstelt said the program has grown significantly in the last year. St. Andrew's only attracts about 50 people on a Sunday morning, but the youth group sees about 25 kids turn out every Friday night from almost all the churches in town. Most nights include games and brain teasers, topic discussions, and every six weeks or so, some kind of outing. "It draws a lot of kids from the community who don't have a church home," said Vanderstelt. "It's a safe place for them to gather." He said they also lead occasional worship services in the various churches involved. "Even if a church only has one or two kids in the group, we try to go there. It lets them feel like they're a part of it."

Most of the congregations of Grey-Bruce-Maitland have long histories;



many of them were established as mission fields to original Presbyterian settlers in the mid-1800s. Knox, Meaford, was one of the first churches in the area. Located on Georgian Bay, they currently support several mission projects such as Evangel Hall in Toronto and the Woman's Place in Owen Sound, and they have a hand bell choir that supplements regular Sunday worship. Many of the other congregations were created for loyal Presbyterians left behind after Church Union in 1925.

The presbytery is currently exploring ways to restructure the committee system and the way presbytery is conducted. "We're hoping to more quickly meet the needs of ministers and congregants to keep them healthy and whole," said Vanderstelt. "If we do that, hopefully people will stay longer." ☺





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[awlittle@sympatico.ca](mailto:awlittle@sympatico.ca).

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N0G 1A0; [bricelmartin@yahoo.com](mailto:bricelmartin@yahoo.com).

Stayner, Jubilee; Sunndale Corners, Zion; Rev. Keith  
Boyer; 27 Laurie Cres., Barrie, ON L4M 6C7;  
705-735-9211; [keb-cvib@sympatico.ca](mailto:keb-cvib@sympatico.ca).

Thornton, Ivy; half time pastor (3-yr. Canada  
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519-651-2232; [cbbrown@rogers.com](mailto:cbbrown@rogers.com).

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85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845;  
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Chesley, Geneva Church; Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie,  
RR 3, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0; Phone: 519-363-5392;  
Fax: 519-363-0975

Hamilton, Central; Full-time minister; The Rev. Harry  
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David's; Rev. Clive W. Simpson, 19 Tisdale St. N.,  
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Bus: 519-472-0360; Home: 519-681-3828  
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Markdale, Cooke's; Feversham, Burns; Rev. Steve  
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519-538-5095

Port Elgin, Tolmie Presbyterian Church and Burgoyne, Knox; Rev. Bill Vanderstelt, PO Box 280, Chatsworth, ON N0H 1G0; 519-794-0155; bvanderstelt@hotmail.com.

Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Interim Minister to begin April 2006; Rev. Terry Samuel, PO Box 587, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0; 519-542-2253; terry.samuel@sympatico.ca.

Southampton, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Doug Lennox, PO Box B36, RR 1, Sauble Beach, ON N0H 2G0dlennox@sympatico.ca.

Tillsonburg, St. Andrew's; Rev. Ferenc Szatmari; 21 Lansdowne Ave, Delhi, ON N4B 3B6; 519-582-2169

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# Jesus spoke out against self-righteousness

*Responding to Recognizing Sin As Sin letter in the July/August issue*

BY WILLIAM JEFFREY

**T**he attitude the letter displayed, reminds me of two young men who once attended worship in the congregation where I choose to worship. One member made it clear to them that “we do not want your kind here.” Now we are all being told in print, by the writer of the letter, that he is obliged to speak on behalf of Almighty God, in order to set the church straight. How presumptuous to state that he is doing this before it is too late.

Too late for what? Too late for showing compassion or understanding or even a twinge of sympathy.

The content and tone of the letter is reminiscent of the arguments used by many of the persons who became agitated during the debates over the ordination of women four decades ago. Same arguments; different subject. Surely we have reformed the ancient tribal customs and uninformed beliefs to the point of defending basic human rights from violation and downright harassment of any kind. After centuries of torment, abuse, rejection and slaughter in the name of Jesus, I suppose I had hoped the church would one day turn on the light and recognize the differences we humans have had since birth.

We are quite aware that all races, genders and orientations have elements who display unacceptable and aberrant behaviour. Society has endorsed methods to deal with such behaviour. That is not, however, what we are talking about. We are verbally lynching human beings, who work, pay taxes, and live peacefully within the laws of the land. They laugh, cry and dare to dream dreams just as the majority of human beings do. They are our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters; our friends, our neighbours and our co-workers. I have trouble accepting their total condemnation by God, even if one of his self-appointed spokespersons believes he can speak for the Divinity and strike them all out for good.

I suspect if we could peer within those deep, dark places where no one else can go except God, we might realize that we are who we are. I cannot accept that sexual orientation is a matter of personal choice. The argument that one chooses to be this or that, is totally absurd. For years, persons who wrote with their left hand were made to feel that they were out of

step with the norm. A whipping didn't work then and it certainly doesn't work now. Was that also God speaking through his servants to announce that right-handedness was what he had in mind at creation?

As I read scripture, I learn of a Jesus who spoke out against the attitudes of the self-righteous and was continually berated by them. Even then he was accused of advocating compassion and grace toward those who were objects of prejudice and bigotry. I cannot remember reading anywhere that he wouldn't acknowledge those kinds of people but rather he spent time among them and showed them God's love. He pointed their thoughts toward God. He dared to be seen with love and the unlovable. For that kind of love, he won the prize: a Criminal's Cross.

Yes, it may come to pass, as the letter predicts: there will be no Presbyterian Church left; or for that matter any other denomination (my words). I cannot believe for an instant that the church will be destroyed by a few homosexuals who asked to be married. If anything destroys the church, it will be at the hand of those mean-spirited people who have an attitude problem and constantly find fault and, yes, sin, in everything and everyone; by rumour-mongers, the power-hungry and all those who spend their waking hours spewing out negative energy that demeans, humiliates and dehumanizes those who are different from them.

It is time to treat one another as Jesus treated persons like us. First and foremost, we ought to stop putting words in God's mouth and/or telling Him what He may or may not do. Or perhaps we ought to ask God to do otherwise as He may in His wisdom, deem best. ☞

William “Bill” Jeffrey lives in Sarnia, Ont.

Opinions expressed in this column are not those of the *Presbyterian Record* but of the author.

# called to wonder

By Erin Walton, youth minister,  
First Church, Edmonton



## With the feasts of Thanksgiving and the treats of Halloween, October often makes us think of nothing but food!

During this time, God also wants us to remember those who are living in poverty and facing hunger every day. Each year, there are over 53,000 children in Canada who do not get enough to eat. The United Nations Childrens Fund is an agency that helps provide children in Canada and around the world with clean water, health, nutrition and education.



### TRICK OR TREAT FOR UNICEF

Each year, over a million children across Canada carry the UNICEF orange collection box at Halloween — do you?

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign in Canada. In almost 50 years school children have raised over \$84 million for children around the world.

Right now there are close to 300,000 malnourished children in Niger who need our help to stop the cycle of starvation.

### READ MATTHEW 14:15-21

What happens in this story?

Why did Jesus' request seem impossible to the Disciples?

Why would Jesus ask us to do things that seem impossible?

Why did Jesus want the food brought to him before it was given out?

Do you say a blessing before you eat? Why?

What does this story teach us about Jesus?

This story also teaches us that with God's help, a little goes a long way. Look what little money it takes to help so much...

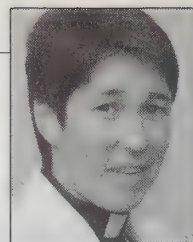
- 50 cents can fully immunize 18 children against Polio in Ghana.
- \$1 can provide 18 children in Cambodia with Vitamin A capsules for 1 year
- \$12 can buy a school chair for a student in Bangladesh



Ask an adult to help you find Niger, Ghana, Cambodia and Bangladesh on a map or globe, or visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org) to see all the places around the world that UNICEF helps and to find out what you can do to help too!

To learn more about God's messages, go online at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca/wonder](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca/wonder)





# Creating communities of care

*We must understand the biblical basis in seeking wholeness and justice*

I have just returned from an exciting weekend with Knox, Sundridge, Ont., on the occasion of their 125th Anniversary. The sanctuary was overflowing with people, and also with faith, hope and love. From my vantage point in the chancel, the scope of ministry at Knox, and throughout our denomination, was dramatically portrayed by the baby, weeks old, on the far right of the front pew and a senior member of the congregation in her wheelchair on the far left. It is a symbol of the church\* the very young and the very old glorifying and enjoying God.

The emphasis on children and youth in our church life is essential and I enjoyed spending time with an exuberant group of young Presbyterians at Knox, Sundridge, Ont., as they celebrated the anniversary of their church family. But Knox is also attentive to the aging community. To mark 125 years of ministry, the congregation has undertaken a special project to provide help for individuals and families affected by Alzheimer Disease and to raise funds for the Alzheimer Society. It is a creative and courageous initiative to support people who have an illness that makes them forget, and who are often forgotten in society and church.

People who live with dementia, and those who care for them, experience devastating loss in their personal, family and community lives. And, it is no clear-cut process of loss that allows those affected to grieve and move on, but a recurring cycle that allows glimmers of recognition one day, and absence of remembering the next. The loss of memory and loss of relationships creates isolation and alienation that goes beyond those directly experiencing the disease. Family members and other caregivers are often so busy with the all-consuming

demands of providing care that their networks of support become eroded.

There is a growing body of research linking faith and health. Through it, is the insight that people with larger, more satisfying and supportive social networks experience better physical, mental and spiritual health. There is evidence that faith-based social networks provide a higher quality and more durable support than that obtained from other sources.

This is not news for those of us who have experienced the gift of good pastoral care from our church. Scripture teaches us that the church can and must manifest the healing love of Christ to its members and beyond its walls.

Reaching out to people with Alzheimer's, and their families, is challenging ministry. Due to our lack of experience or understanding, or our own sense of vulnerability and fear, our first response may be to simply hope the problem will go away. The likely result of this inaction is that the people may go away, or the hope may go away, because our patterns of worship and pastoral care, as well as our education programs and fellowship times do not intentionally address the spiritual needs of people living with dementia.

And yet, it is our kind of community that is best suited to respond. As Christians, we understand the biblical basis of our care in seeking wholeness and justice. We know the power of Christian community that is inclusive and offers welcome and belonging. We know the life-affirming gift of mercy and compassion. We know that all are created in the image of God, and each one uniquely and beautifully made.

As our society ages, there will be an increasing number of people who are touched by Alzheimer's and the church

needs to equip itself to be able to respond in ways that honour their spiritual life. The unique dimensions of spirituality expressed by those with dementia are a gift that can teach us about our relationship with God, who always remembers each one of us.

May our ministries with each other, older and younger, encourage us to glorify and enjoy God in whatever ways we can.

Peace,

## MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

### October

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>2</b>     | Medicine Hat, Alta.   |
| <b>6-11</b>  | International Ministries, Mexico                            |
| <b>14-15</b> | Presbytery of Calgary Macleod<br>HIV/AIDS awareness weekend |
| <b>16</b>    | Ailsa Craig, Ailsa Craig, Ont.<br>135th anniversary         |
| <b>17</b>    | Ritz Luthern Villa, Mitchell, Ont.                          |
| <b>21-23</b> | Vancouver Island<br>Women's Retreat, BC.                    |
| <b>23</b>    | Saanich Peninsula, Sidney, B.C.                             |
| <b>27-28</b> | Dream Builders Conference<br>Calgary, Alta.                 |
| <b>29</b>    | St. Andrew's Lethbridge, Alta.<br>120th anniversary dinner  |





The moderator with the children of Knox, Sundridge.

Women collect water at a deep well provided by ACT with PWS&D's support in the Ardabba Camp for internally displaced people in Darfur Sudan.



*"Water, water everywhere, Nor any drop to drink"*

Millions of people today live in environments without clean water supply.

Watch for the fall issue of PWSDevelopments in November's *Presbyterian Record*, where Presbyterian World Service and Development focuses on work to help ensure everyone has access to Earth's largest and most vital resource: **water**.

PHOTO: PAUL JEFFRE , ACT



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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

PWS&D  
Newsletter

November 2005

## PLANNING GROWTH

Developing new congregations

Responding to immigration  
and demographic changes

Bonhoeffer's ethics

Jean Morris remembers





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## Keeping churches from being ghettos

“We have to be Canadians first, and then other things are secondary or third degree. Multiculturalism up to now has been fantastic, it has brought us to a very important level, but we now have to take this to the next stage.” ●

This observation comes from Baljit Singh Chadha, a highly successful Montreal businessman who emigrated to Canada from India in the mid-1970s. Chadha was interviewed

by Peter C. Newman for a recent *Maclean's* magazine article about the New-Canadian Establishment.

Chadha expresses his concern that the immigrants of the 1970s and 1980s are facing the same sorts of problems, including discrimination, that the Irish of the 1840s and the Jews of the last century faced, and he wonders why society seems unable to avoid this.

He notes that part of the problem is that immigrants “are always drawn together where their own kinds are” and so live in relatively closed communities. “There are people who consider that the Malton-Brampton area [on Toronto’s outskirts] is an Indo-Canadian ghetto,” Chadha told Newman.

“If you go north of Toronto, there are Italian neighbourhoods. Same thing with the Greek neighbourhoods. In Côte St-Luc in Montreal, it’s Jewish. Probably... because it’s people of a certain stock, people don’t call them ghettos.”

These words pose as deep a challenge to institutional Christianity as to society — not just in the broad moral sense, but with respect to evangelism.

This year, Canada will have admitted up to 245,000 immigrants. Most of these new Canadians will pour into our cities. About 1,000 people move to Toronto alone each week — that’s about half the total population of peninsular Halifax.

What are church-going Christians doing about this third wave of immigrants? In the Presbyterian Church it’s not Italians, Irish or Greeks but Koreans, Ghanaians, Taiwanese and Chinese.

This month’s cover story on the Toronto Ghanaian congregation’s new church near Pearson airport makes a useful case in point. On the one hand, it’s understandable, as Mr. Chadha has observed, that this ethnic community would pull together to build their own church, and it’s awe-inspiring to see how quickly this impressive facility has been built.

But was it necessary for the Ghanaians to build their own church? That’s the \$4.2-million question.

Did the Ghanaians feel welcome and comfortable in “white” Anglo-Scottish churches? Did Anglo-Scots Presbyterians make Ghanaians welcome and comfortable? Are the two cultures incompatible in this third-party land of Canada, where Scottish traditions, such as the infamous Kirkin’ o’ the Tartan are more common than in Scotland?

Cultural alliances have to do with the soul wanting to belong. The question Christians need to ask is whether in this postmodern world, cultural distinctions warrant distinct worshipping communities and distinct multi-million dollar buildings?

This is not a new issue in the church given the controversial establishment of two Korean Han-Ca presbyteries and their congregations. But it is never too late to revisit — from both sides — whether such decisions remain the right ones.

Creating religio-cultural ghettos may create a sense of ethnic pride, but it is difficult to see how they strengthen the overall community of faith and how they witness to a gospel where there is neither Jew nor Greek.

Our Anglo-Scottish forebears built many edifices that are now crumbling and almost empty, in part due to the massive demographic shifts in the country over the past 50 years. As more immigrants call Canada home (both good and necessary), those changes will continue.

No business survives without a master vision that includes human and material resources. The church is no different.

We have to be Christians first and then Presbyterians, other things are third degree. Perhaps the success of the Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese and Ghanaian Presbyterians is best viewed in Mr. Chadha’s terms: up to now, it has been fantastic. But we now have to take this to the next stage. All our cultures need room in our church.

David Harris



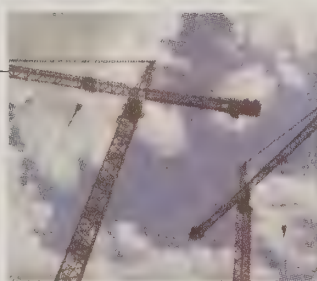


The children's choir at the Portuguese Speaking Presbyterian Church raise a joyful song.

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# letters

## Less scolding, more PWS&D

As a Canadian, I could have done without that scolding from David Harris in September. Perhaps he's right we can afford more aid to Africa, but I for one object to sending our tax dollars to keep some dictator and his wives in luxury cars. I would recommend that for a country to be eligible for financial aid, a responsible government, hopefully one elected, has to be in place and there should be demonstrable benefit to the people in the projects they undertake. Food and medicinal aid are a different matter, but again, accounting for the distribution of these should be mandatory. Debt forgiveness may have a sweet ring to it, but how many times should a given country have its debts forgiven? I suggest once.

Do I feel for the poor people of Africa? Of course, all Christians do, but most of us do not want our hard earned money thrown into a pit.

Notwithstanding the above, as a Presbyterian, I have confidence in PWS&D and I give regularly to this organization. I know that whatever money I give will be directed to the right places and monitored. I would also recommend Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Both of these organizations have people on the ground to verify that the gifts get to those in need.

Cal Withers  
London, Ont.

We do not need the government to get involved in reducing poverty overseas, when we all know the problems of the dictators and politicians getting at the funds before they are distributed to where they are required.

We have PWS&D to handle all of our contributions. We send our donations monthly, and leave the choice of the project up to the PWS&D staff, who know where the need is greatest. This ensures that none is siphoned off to politicians or dictators, or delayed in government bureaucracy.

Let's show our initiative and get behind our own programs, which ensure that all funds are put to the best possible use.

Betty Petrie  
Parksville, B.C.

## Gettin' God out and about

One of the greatest benefits of becoming a member of St. Andrew's, New Liskeard, Ont., recently is getting the *Record*. I look forward to it every month. Your emphasis is, as the kids used to say, Right on.

Richard Pryor is probably not considered a theologian, but he tells this story:

I had a dream once that I was praying in church and heard a voice behind me.

"Pst, Rich."

"Yes, what is it?" I asked.

"It's me, God",

"Where are you, Lord?"

"Look behind you," I heard the voice say, and I looked and saw the crucifix on the wall.

"Will you do me a favour?"

"Of course Lord, what do you want

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Our new building is nearing completion, and we are excited to say we will be moving in December!

During our move, we will be temporarily closing our Thrift Shop. At this time we ask that our kind donors only bring the following listed items, which are urgently needed for the Winter months.

Our Thrift Shop will re-open in the new building, and will have plenty of room for us to accept more kind offerings

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*Letters continued*

me to do?"

"Get me down outta here"

He has a point. Let's get God out of the pulpit and into the world.

*Dr. Cleaver Keenan*

*New Liskeard, Ont.*

## Dynamic voices

Youth Voice, in September, is one of the most dynamic issues, and your staff and the contributors are to be congratulated.

One thing is clear — those who criticize teens, don't really know teens. Opinions are easily formed on the basis of media reports and many of those are slanted to arouse excitement. Good news doesn't sell. It is therefore exciting to read thoughtful comments from young people who know who they are, what they want and are determined to seek it.

To say churches are living in the past is refuted by some of those who contributed. They want a different kind of worship. Why not prepare the kind of worship service that is acceptable to them? With some care and consideration (and prayer) surely an acceptable format and content could be worked out. I'm always surprised by what God can do. I will guarantee that young people will have a struggle to design something they would all accept!

The young people describe themselves in various terms. This will lead to the comment that not everyone can be lumped together in one category. We are all individuals and must not generalize.

We need more young people in our churches. Perhaps it's the young themselves who should be developing attendance for their peers rather than leave it to us old-fashioned people, many of whom, like me, never heard of Radiohead!

*J. E. Vallance*

*Nanaimo, B.C.*

What will it take to get you to stop excluding males from the front covers of our church magazine that have to do with Youth and Sunday School news items?

The caption reads, Youth Voice. But the picture reads, Girls Voice.

Why are you and your editorial staff so blatantly unaware of gender issues in the church and how difficult it is to include

boys that you continue to exclude them when you have the opportunity to help?

Don't tell me that there are pictures of males in the inside. Why would the boys open it for religious or faith reasons after looking at the cover?

I want an answer!

*Rev. Alan Stewart*

*Pictou, N.S.*

Have greatly enjoyed the September *Record*. It was great to read about our members going all around the world. But they seem to come home to a strange place. Leaskdale is not spelled Leaskdale. Please take note.

*Rodney Haynes*

*Leaskdale, Ont.*

## Get input from the out gone

The old Presbyterian church where I was confirmed as a teen, dies more with each passing year. The pews are sparsely filled, mostly by seniors while the Sunday school classes continue to dwindle. I'm now in the church alumni association as John Spong puts it, yet I do not obtain the least bit of glee at seeing the demise of the church, especially where there is any suffering involved. Owen Thornton states, "we still do have the best deal in town" and that "its just a matter of spreading the word." I'm sure Thornton is a kind and greatly respected man but in my humble opinion, statements like this need to be seriously studied and questioned. Less than a year ago, (Oct. 2004), David Harris wrote his excellent article on Churches Must Change Or Be Changed. In it he quotes Prof. Bibby as saying, "What is required is a clear cut strategy that is informed by sound research and sound congregational input." I might add to this non-congregational input, since the focus increasingly needs to be on the reasons of those who prefer not to attend church.

*Paul Marshall*

*Barrie, Ont.*

## A Record arrival

I thought you should know that the September issue set a record by arriving in my mail box in B.C. on August 24.

November 2005 | **Presbyterian Record**

Canada

Magazines  
Canada

Normally I do not receive my copy until around the 20th of the issue month.

June Macleod  
via email

### Trendy newfangled notions

In response to David Campbell's September letter: Nobody needs to revert to the Holiness Code in Leviticus to find support for traditional ethical precepts. There are sufficient texts in the New Testament to support conservative views on homosexual practice, same-sex marriage, etc. The Greek word *porneia* covers all unacceptable sexual behaviour. Jesus clearly defined marriage for us: Mt. 19:5. This is nothing to chuckle about.

The trouble with the Presbyterian church is not that she has regressed into conservatism, but that she has begun toying with the trendy newfangled notions of gay marriage and gay ordination as we read occasionally in the *Record*.

This is the reason (among others) for the declining membership, as happened to the United Church, "a denomination shrinking away before our eyes." By contrast, it is the conservative denominations that preserve "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), that thrive and prosper. These are the facts, which Campbell totally ignores.

Rev. H.L. Wipprecht  
Cobalt, Ont.

### Laugh when you can

I read Phil Callaway's article in September and my heart goes out to his family. I watched my mother slowly deteriorate for nearly 11 years after my

dad died and it was the hardest thing I have done in my adult years. My mother, my best friend for years, didn't remember who I was and at the end while I held her hand I prayed that she knew it was me with her.

I can only tell you to laugh when you can, cry when you must, hold onto the memories — the memories comfort — and pray for strength to help you over the next while. May God bless you all during this difficult time.

Barbara Browne  
via email

### Sunday spiritually charged

Re. Andrew Faiz' *Sunday Morning Dysfunction*, July/August.

Is he serious, or is this some kind of joke?

If the church Mr. Faiz attends is so dysfunctional that he does not feel there is value in Sunday morning service, then maybe he should try going to a different church, either within the same denomination or with a different denomination. For myself, I LOVE Sunday morning service and I get a tremendous spiritual charge from it, and I know others do too. Church service (singing, praying, sermons and anything else that takes place in the service) should be all about worshipping God, and if you are questioning the value of that, then I question whether you are a Christian.

This will only encourage non-believers to stay away from church. They will say, even some Christians question the value of their own church service.

Alasdair Coats  
Canmore, Alta.

### Dancing Fee

On the weekend of May 28, Durham Presbyterian celebrated its 150th anniversary. We were honoured to have then-Moderator Rev. Richard Fee attend these celebrations.

His message was relevant and meaningful and he took part in our events with enthusiasm and pleasure. This could not be more evidenced than during our Saturday evening entertainment. When a little dancing girl named Megan interrupted his speech, Mr. Fee joined in the dancing. When we needed an extra gentleman to take part in our fashion show celebrating the past 150 years, he became a fashion model. For the weekend, he was part of our congregation as we celebrated our life as a church family.

This is the way it should always be. All of us should rejoice for every congregation in Canada and the world as we seek to learn more about our Lord and spread the Word to others. We truly are one family of God.

Thank you Mr. Fee for your participation in this special event in our church's history.

Wendy McConnell  
Durham, Ont.

### Continuing the conversation

In the July/August *Record*, Ron Benty presumes to judge the Presbytery of East Toronto and many of us in the Presbyterian church who do not believe that homosexuality is sinful and want to continue in conversation about this matter.

It is unfortunate that he apparently does not realize that there are other widely accepted hermeneutical princi-

Letters continued on page 43

## Pontius' Puddle





# people & places

Can you spot the Presbyterian?

Take another look.

This is the face of our church — the legacy of missions past and hope's future. This happy gang at Faith, Toronto, gives us a glimpse of who we can be.

Back row: Elen, Caleb, Hilary, Brianna, Myiah, Marie-Grace, Audrey, Crystal, Emilete, Mary.  
Front row: Elise, Isaiah, Eron, Isabella, Victoria.



Rev. Rick Fee, then moderator, is not in the centre of this photograph — you can see him on the far right. Nor is the \$50,000 cheque from the Legacy Committee at Knox, Red Deer, Alta., he is holding in his hand. The cheque was for PWS&D's HIV/AIDS initiative. Rev. Andrew S. Burnand is not in the middle of the photo either; he's standing right of Fee. No, at the heart of this image are the sanctuary, the image of Christ and the 19 young members of the church who presented the cheque. Somehow the placements seem just right.

**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.



**For more People & Places submissions**  
**please visit our website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)**

Nova Scotia Lt. Governor General, Myra Freeman, came to St. Paul's, Merigomish, Pictou County, to honour Joan Murray with the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. The citation recognized the retired nurse for "her considerable skills and energy to help elderly and isolated people throughout her large rural community. With kindness, she listens to their problems and offers words of encouragement. Mrs. Murray administers injections, dresses wounds and provides advice about medications or assistance to new mothers. In cases requiring medical attention, she helps make the appointment and provides transportation if necessary. As well, she shares produce from her small farm with needy families. Many elderly people are able to live independently because of Mrs. Murray's constant availability and attentive care."



**Cake of the month:**  
 In honour of Derek Krunys, student intern at Parkwood, Nepean, Ont. There he is beaming in the middle as Rev. James Hurd offers a blessing on Derek's ministry and the wonderful spread on the table.

Rev. Dr. R. Douglas MacDonald turned 90 last year. And this year he celebrated two anniversaries: of 65 years since his ordination and, more importantly, 65 years of marriage to his beloved Laura. For a full appreciation please see the People and Places page on our website. Laura Mac Donald, Rev. Dr. R. Douglas Mac Donald, John D. MacKay (Representative Elder for Knox, Ripley) and Marian Raynard (Worship Leader for the Ashfield, Knox, Ripley Pastoral Charge).





## THE BOOK ROOM BESTSELLERS

1. **Purpose Driven Life, What on Earth Am I Here For?**  
Rick Warren, Zondervan Press,  
\$18.50
2. **Heart of Christianity, Rediscovering a Life of Faith**  
Marcus Borg  
Harper Collins Press, \$22.00
3. **Matthew for Everyone, Part 1 and Part 2**  
Tom Wright  
SPCK Publishing, \$24.25
4. **Way of the Labyrinth, A Powerful Meditation for Everyday Life**  
Helen Curry  
Penguin Compass, \$23.25
5. **Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander**  
Barbara Coloroso  
Harper Collins, \$21.00
6. **Thinking Theologically about Haves and Have Nots**  
Youth Study  
Abingdon Press, \$11.50
7. **World Religions Access Guide**  
Michael Keene  
Lion Publishing, \$18.95
8. **Purse Driven Life, It Really is All About Me**  
Anita Renfroe  
Nav Press, \$16.75
9. **W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy**  
A. Donald Macleod  
McGill-Queens University Press,  
\$31.50
10. **Jesus and the Twelve Dudes Who Did,**  
Mindy Macdonald  
Multnomah Kidz Pub., \$16.50

# To fund or not to fund

Debate over the funding of faith based schools is growing in Ontario. Noam Goodman, a Toronto lawyer writing in the *National Post*, calls the exclusive funding of Catholic schools "explicit religious discrimination." He reports that seven per cent of 750,000 Ontario students who attend faith-based schools (which include Protestant, Muslim and Jewish) do so in schools that are not publicly funded. The other 93 per cent are in the Roman Catholic system.

Catholic schools have been funded in Ontario since 1985. In parts of the rest of the country Catholic school funding has been available since 1867.

Goodman argues that this decree should be updated to reflect Canada's current faith diversity, noting that according to the Supreme Court of Canada, Ontario is with- in its rights to do so.

The former Conservative government's Equity In Education Tax Credit, which came into effect in 2002 but was quashed by Ontario's current government, allowed parents who sent their children to private religious schools to be partially reim- bursed for tuition fees.

The scheme offered Ontario parents a refundable tax credit for 50 per cent of the first \$7,000 of a child's independent school tuition. The only program that comes close to it today is Children First: School Choice Trust. The privately funded program pays up to 50 per cent of tuition costs from junior kindergarten to Grade 8, based on financial need.

The *Post* ran a counter-argument by Adam Radwanski who agreed with Good- man's synopsis of the lopsided situation, but argued that Ontario should follow Quebec and Newfoundland, who did away with the dual system in favour of one public system for all.

He mentions that dividing the school system into numerous private schools along faith-based lines would only segregate students, rather than enabling them to grow up in a pluralistic society – particularly important for new immigrants who al- ready struggle with integrating into their adopted communities.

The *Toronto Star*, in a 2003 story, when the education tax credit was being intro- duced, lamented that help to fund private schools will only undermine the public system, shunting money away from it and leaving it with even fewer resources.

"Education is the great equalizer in society," wrote authors Rizwana Jafri and Tarek Fatah. "A society, through its publicly funded education system, ensures that everyone has an opportunity to achieve success." They argued that the tax credit was simply the beginning of creating a two-tiered education system. "Instead of assisting diversity, private religious education will simply create a narrow-minded, elitist and segregated population." – *AM*

## Kitchener recovers after loss

Losing a minister is never easy. Losing three is even worse. That's exactly what happened at St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont. Despite the set- back, the congregation is regaining its foot- ing and looking to the future. "The dust has settled, people got to speak their minds and got questions out of their hearts," said Rev. Aubrey Botha, interim moderator. "They're ready to move on; to start being new and do- ing new things. They're very excited."

After the senior and two associate min- isters had their pastoral ties severed in September 2004, shock and sadness wove

through the pews. The change was too much for some, with a few parishioners leaving. Today, with a weekly attendance of about 550, the church is looking for a new full-time minister to replace interim minister Rev. Vernon Tozer. "The most im- portant thing right now for them is to get a bit more permanency back," said Botha.

The congregation completed a two-day strategic planning session, looking forward to the next three years. Botha said he hopes to have at least one new minister in place sometime in the early part of 2006. – *AM*



Under the influence of Marxism, Cuba was an atheist state. Constitutional reforms in 1992 made it secular. This opening of the churches has created a sudden growth. Pastor Dora Valentin, middle, of Iglesia Presbiterina Reformada, Luyano, has seen her congregation grow 200 per cent over the past quarter century. According to her, there is a well-educated generation but it knows nothing about the church. Church is something to which they feel called, but of which they have no experience. Of the 600,000 church goers on the island, half are Protestant, though most were born Roman Catholics. Presbyterians are an active presence in this new Cuba.

## Ontario bans religious tribunals

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT has banned the use of sharia law and other religious tribunals, including Jewish and Christian. "There will be no religious arbitration in Ontario," Premier Dalton McGuinty told the Canadian Press. "There will be one law for all Ontarians." New legislation prohibiting religious arbitration could be introduced this fall. It is still unclear exactly what the ban will entail, and how it will be implemented and enforced.

The *Record* reported in its October issue that a review of sharia law was taking place in the form of a report from former Ontario attorney-general Marion Boyd, who recommended that the practice of sharia law in family disputes should be allowed, with new safeguards put in place.

The latest decision came on the heels of international protests, where concerned citizens argued that sharia law is discriminatory against women. Rallies were held in 12 cities across Canada and Europe.

Religious arbitration has been practised since 1991 under the Arbitration Act, which was touted as a victory for multiculturalism. Critics say the new decision to outlaw sharia will only force it behind closed doors. Canada's Muslim population numbers about 650,000. — AM

## Welcomed change to federal food aid rules

FOOD AID AGENCIES like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank can now use 50 percent of their federal funding to purchase grain from developing countries. Prior regulations allowed only 10 per cent of these funds to be used for foreign grain. The announcement was heralded by CFGB executive director Jim Cornelius.

"This is a welcome change," said Cornelius in a statement. "There will still be a lot of instances when it will make good sense to purchase Canadian products, but in many of our projects we can serve our beneficiaries better if we purchase food in the region where they live. This allows us to support local markets, deliver the food quickly and save on expensive freight charges."

The long-awaited decision, which received Cabinet approval in September, is something CFGB had been encouraging for seven years. It argued that the old system limited the flexibility to help those in need and could actually harm those waiting for help.

The *Record* reported on this debate in February, when Canadian aid agencies were frustrated by the government's restrictions while trying to assist countries ravaged by the tsunami. Funds given by CFGB (of which the Presbyterian Church is a member) are matched at a ratio of 4:1 by the Canadian International Development Agency. Thanks to the new regulation, donations made by Presbyterians will have an even greater effect, enabling more of the matched funds to be used in a more efficient and economical way.

Canada still lags behind Australia, which allows up to 67 per cent of food aid to be purchased locally, and the European Union which permits nearly unlimited purchase of local foods in specific situations. — AM with files from CFGB



## Unclaimed cemetery vandalized

MYSTERIES ABOUND in a sad story concerning vandalism in a once-Presbyterian cemetery in southern Ontario. In mid-summer, vandals toppled 31 headstones in Primrose Presbyterian Cemetery and two other closed cemeteries. No one knows who the perpetrators are, but neither does anyone seem to know who even holds the deed to the property – and therefore, the repair bill.

It could cost as much as \$15,000 to repair the broken monuments in the cemetery in Ontario's Mulmur Township. Only one of the aging headstones was left standing. Many broke when they were tipped over. The other two damaged cemeteries belong to the township, which is responsible for repairing any damage. But who is responsible for Primrose?

When the rural congregation voted to join the United Church in 1925, the building was sold shortly after, and has long since disappeared. Morley Brown, whose relatives are buried in the cemetery and who maintains the property along with another local family, said the United Church has yet to determine its role in the matter. The Presbyterian Church has no record of the cemetery.

Brown said churches should have insurance to cover such costs. "Vandalism like this is not an isolated incident," he said.

Individual congregations handle their own insurance, however, and any coverage of a cemetery would fall under this (and not under the national church). Stephen Roche, chief financial officer of the Presbyterian Church, said usually if the property is owned by a congregation and named as such in the church's insurance policy, vandalism would be covered under general liability. Since the Primrose cemetery is no longer tied to a congregation, it would seem there is no insurance coverage.

Susan Snider, a councillor at the township and member of its cemetery committee, said the committee has agreed to pay for some of the needed repair. "The cemetery used to be in beautiful shape," she said. "We're at least getting some of the stones upright again." – AM

Hurricane Katrina left behind piles of debris and flood damage at First Presbyterian Church in Ocean Springs, Miss., nine miles east of Biloxi.

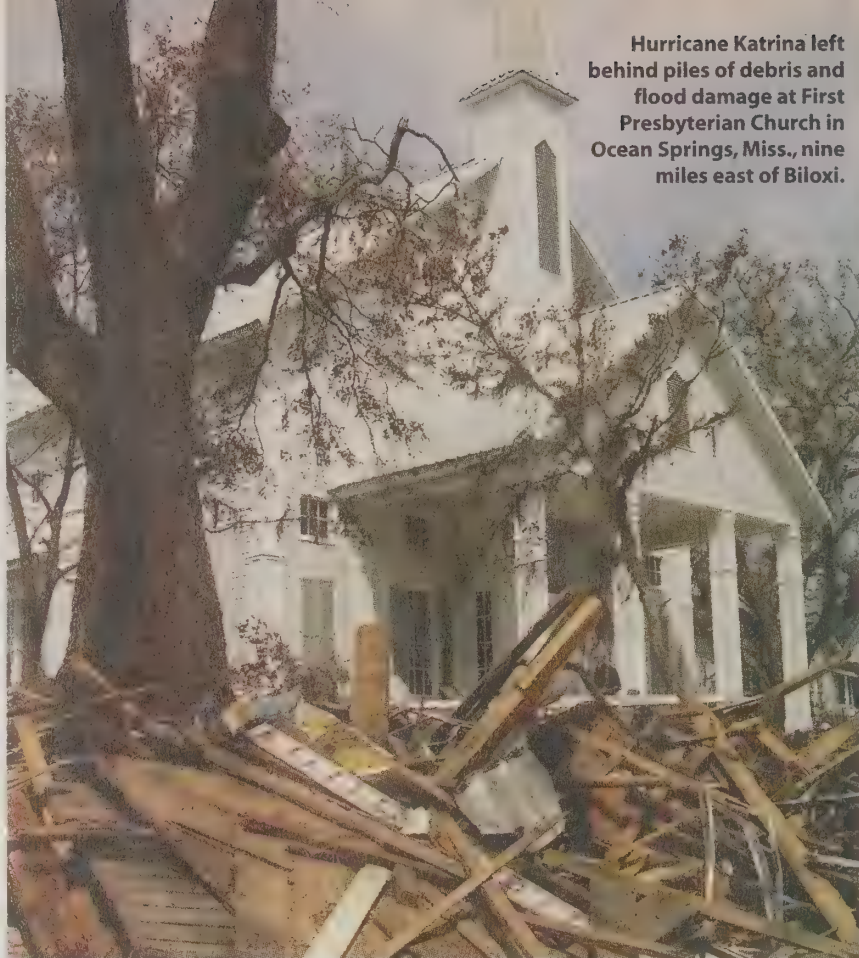


PHOTO: EVAN SILVERSTEIN/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

## Responding to Katrina's devastation

Canadian Presbyterians immediately responded to cries for help from the Gulf Coast in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, donating more than \$77,000 as of September. The money will help Church World Service and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the relief wing of the Presbyterian Church (USA), clean up the devastated areas, meet the immediate needs of survivors and assist in the rebuilding process.

CWS is the relief, development and refugee assistance ministry of 36 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations in the United States. They are currently in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas to establish and support community-based long-term recovery organizations that provide local, hands-on assistance to hurricane survivors. They are working ecumenically to help evacuees resettle in new areas, provide counselling to those in distress and train ministers and lay leaders to work with disaster victims.

PDA is coordinating volunteer efforts, donating money and supplies, reuniting displaced parishioners and pastors and helping congregations get back on their feet. They're also setting up camps where volunteers can live temporarily while removing debris, cleaning houses and doing repairs. As aid initiatives are increasingly shifting to local organizations, PDA is constantly reassessing how its resources can best be used.

Presbyterians in Canada can visit the ravaged Gulf Coast through a partnership mission between the Presbyterian Church in Canada and PC(USA). Teams of six or more people will clean up debris in Mississippi for one-week periods over the next 12 months. Applicants should note that the work is labour-intensive and conditions are still quite harsh. Contact Barbara Nawratil at [bnawratil@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bnawratil@presbyterian.ca) or 1-800-619-7301 for more information or to submit an application.

Donations can be made to Presbyterian World Service & Development or through local congregations by marking Hurricane Katrina on the envelope. – AM

## Small arms need control

**P**roject Ploughshares, an ecumenical peace agency of the Canadian Council of Churches, is launching a campaign advocating the control of the sale of small arms and light weapons. The public awareness and education campaign is designed to inspire Canadians to call for greater governmental commitment to control small arms and deal with the underlying conditions of the weapons problem. "We're hoping that Canadians will see that these weapons need to be controlled and in places where they are already causing problems on the ground, that the government is making an effort to fix the problem," said Lynne Griffiths-Fulton, program associate at Project Ploughshares.

There are over 600 million small arms in circulation around the world – one for every 10 people on the planet, according to the Toronto-based agency. It is hoped that the campaign will elicit a reaction at the United Nations Small Arms Review Conference in July 2006. The Ploughshares website notes that a previous international program of action at the 2001 UN Conference on Small Arms is lagging due to insufficient funding and a lack of political will to make changes.

"In a way, this is more complicated than nuclear disarmament," said Stephen Allen, associate secretary of the church's Justice Ministries and chairman of the CCC's Committee on Justice and Peace. "Small arms cost \$500 to make and they're available everywhere. And after wars end, people can buy them at the market for \$50. They proliferate like measles."

Allen said it's important to note that the campaign isn't about banning small weapons, but about developing and ensuring transparency and greater attention to detail regarding Canada's arms exports. "It's about strengthening Canada's policies and practices, and pushing the international community to strengthen their control of the sale of small weapons."

Canadians can write letters to the Prime Minister, sign the Million Faces petition and urge their congregations to draft and adopt a resolution supporting stricter control of small arms trade. Campaign resource materials have been developed for use by churches, individuals and community groups. To learn more, visit the Project Ploughshares website at: [www.ploughshares.ca/control/SALWPublic](http://www.ploughshares.ca/control/SALWPublic). – *AM with files from Project Ploughshares*

[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



## CHRISTMAS AT KNOX COLLEGE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2005

7:30 p.m.

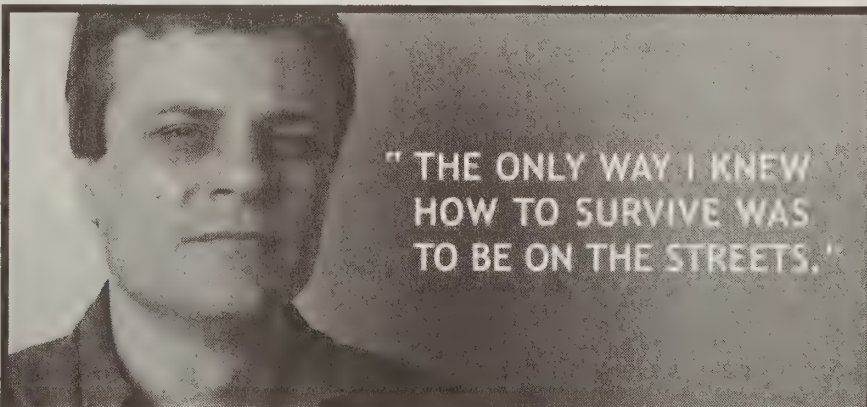
KNOX COLLEGE CHAPEL

All are invited to join the  
Faculty, Staff and Students  
for the Annual Christmas Concert

*Free will offering. Refreshments will be served.*



Knox College 59 St. George St. Toronto  
416-978-4500 [knox.college@utoronto.ca](mailto:knox.college@utoronto.ca) [www.utoronto.ca/knox](http://www.utoronto.ca/knox)



"THE ONLY WAY I KNEW  
HOW TO SURVIVE WAS  
TO BE ON THE STREETS."

For most of my life it was the only thing I knew. I went through a lot of hell. I went through drug withdrawals and having no place to live. I went through most of my life having nothing. LOFT Community Services helped me get off the streets because they cared and they didn't want me to change. They didn't tell me that I had to get off the street, but they were there when I was ready to make the move. I came to McEwan House because they accepted me as I was and gave me the support I needed. I respect them for that.



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## Churches praying for peace

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES has urged nations to strive for a world without poverty as it called for an International Day of Prayer for Peace on September 21, the same day as the United Nations International Day of Peace.

"Our vision as churches is that of a world in which the God-given life of each human person is protected, in which all peoples can live in peace with justice, a world in which poverty is no longer tolerated," said WCC general secretary Rev. Samuel Kobia in Geneva.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had called on all countries and people to stop hostilities for one day to observe the International Day of Peace. Annan said although 24 hours of global cease-fire was not long, it was enough for combatants and political leaders to consider the destruction they were inflicting on their people.

"It is long enough to look over the barricades, and through the barbed wires and to see if there is another path," said Annan.

The UN held a 24-hour vigil in New York encouraging "worldwide, 24-hour spiritual observations for peace and nonviolence in every house of worship and place of spiritual practice, by all religious and spiritually based groups and individuals, and by all men, women and children who seek peace in the world."

The WCC, representing 560 million Christians from 342 churches, wanted to join the vigil as a part of its Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). Staff at the national offices of The Presbyterian Church in Canada honoured the vigil by taking turns praying for 15 minutes throughout the 20th and 21st.

— AM with files from ENI



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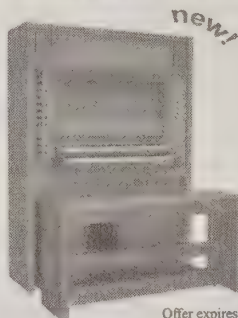
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Rev. Rick Fee is inducted as the new general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. Rev. Wayne Hancock, moderator of East Toronto Presbytery, led the ceremony.

## New position for Rick Fee

Rev. Richard Fee was formally inducted into his new position as General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency on Sept. 28. He succeeds Rev. Ian Morrison, who has retired. Fee was previously executive director of Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Held at church offices, the standing-room only service gathered presbytery members, national staff, friends and colleagues. Fee thanked Morrison for his guidance as he passed the LMA torch unto him, and said the induction service left him "reinforced and buoyed up." "I will not do this work alone," he said. "I look forward to working with all of you. It will be fun! We will enjoy this."

Rev. Daniel Cho, minister at Rexdale, gave the charge to the new general secretary. Cho spoke of Fee's "vibrant, robust and unrelenting" work ethic. He said Fee has "a passion to honour God's calling upon him" and encouraged him to continue to discern this calling amidst the escalating demands of his career.

Although he declined mentioning his specific hopes for his new position, Fee told the assembled to read two of the hymns that he chose for his induction service. "They say what I'd like to say in full," he said. "I endeavour to live out

these words." Below are verses from each hymn:

*May The God Of Hope Go With Us  
Every Day; 726, Book of Praise*

Praying, let us work for peace,  
Singing, share our joy with all,  
Working for a world that's new,  
Faithful when we hear God's call.

*Called As Partners In Christ's Service;  
587, Book of Praise*

Called as partners in Christ's service,  
Called to ministries of grace,  
We respond with deep commitment,  
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
May we learn the art of sharing,  
Side by side and friend with friend,  
Equal partners in our caring  
To fulfill God's chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring,  
Christ's clear call to work and worth,  
Let us follow, never faltering,  
Reconciling folk on earth.  
Men and women, richer, poorer,  
All God's people, young and old,  
Blending human skills together,  
Gracious gifts from God unfold. — AM

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# LOOKING FOR GROWTH IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES

Booming cities, sprawling suburbs and ethnic communities hold hope for future

*by Amy MacLachlan*

**T**he Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Toronto is growing so quickly they have had to move from one building to the next, trying to ease their bursting seams. Since a few people first gathered in a living room 11 years ago, their growth hasn't stopped. "These people were homesick for the way they worshipped back home. They missed the dancing and the African touch," said Rev. Enoch Pobee, the Ghanaian church's minister. Word travelled fast and before they knew it, they had moved three times as more parishioners flocked to the church. "They finally thought, 'We can't keep moving. What's stopping us from getting a place of our own?'" said Pobee, who is in his third year of service.

The search began for a new site and land was eventually purchased in North Toronto. They moved into the newly built \$4.2-million structure this fall. "We have 500 adults, children and youth, and we're anticipating doubling our numbers in the near future," he said. They're planning on holding two services on Sunday and running community-based programs to reach out to their neighbours. The project was made possible through a grant at Canada Ministries, a grant from presbytery, a loan, and givings from the congregation. Pobee said looking to ethnic communities as an opportunity for growth

is important to the church's future. "There are a great number of multicultural communities in Toronto," he said. "It's a very good vision for the PCC to embark on. It should be encouraged and supported so we can integrate into one and keep the church going."

Gordon Haynes, associate secretary at Canada ministries, said church planting and development works best when it is led at the local level, as the Ghanaian church was. He said this is because community make-up changes across Canada and presbyteries are most in touch with their local communities and know what is needed. "And the national church can help out where it can," he said.

Starting new churches obviously requires researching the proposed area. Particularly when considering Toronto and its surrounding areas, ethnicity becomes a factor. While between 540,000 and one million people are expected to move to Toronto in the next 30 years, relatively few will be traditional Anglo-Scot Presbyterians. In 2001, more than two million immigrants called Toronto home, according to Statistics Canada. The largest numbers came from Eastern and Southern Asia (with almost 600,000), followed by Southern Europe (with about 315,000). Toronto has the highest level of multiculturalism in Canada.

The new Ghanaian  
Presbyterian Church in  
Toronto's north end nears  
completion and will soon  
be filled with dancing and  
the African touch.







Growing multiculturalism isn't a recipe for the church's disaster. The five presbyteries in the Greater Toronto Area account for about 16 per cent of the PCC's nearly 124,000 members (and almost 28 per cent when including three large presbyteries on the outskirts of the GTA — Barrie, Lindsay-Peterborough and Hamilton). As immigrants continue to flock to the GTA, it seems logical that these areas can provide some opportunity for growth.

However, when the City of Toronto announced its official plan in 2002, mapping out growth of the GTA for the next 30 years, churches and places of worship were conspicuously absent. The plan specifically included residential developments, schools and hospitals, business and industry, parks and waterfront property. City officials argued that although churches were not listed, they were still considered to be part of the city's rapid growth.

The planning team assured churches that this didn't change their ability to build new churches in the city, but the Toronto diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada thought

places of worship deserved more certainty than that. They appealed the plan, asking for greater recognition of the vital role faith communities play in the city. In May, the Ontario Municipal Board made a preliminary ruling that the plan has to be amended to specifically include places of worship — both within the plan's overall vision and in the more technical aspects of growth. "We're pleased that anyone can build, regardless of faith group," said Brian Mills, director of Planning and Development at the diocese. "We were terribly disappointed that we weren't included, now we're relieved. We wanted to be part of the language."

If cities need to be prodded to make room for new churches, how do denominations plan for growth? The Presbyterian Church delegates this responsibility to presbyteries, with support and collaboration from Canada Ministries. But with the much-told story of declining numbers, one wonders if this method is the way to go. "This is a hard question to answer," said Haynes. "Practically, in some presbyteries, there has been little happening in developing new congregations. However, I don't think that moving it away from the local area to a more centralized strategy would work. We just need to get the presbyteries more involved in Canadian mission opportunities. Actually, I think we need to put more of the process in the hands of the presbyteries."

Haynes thinks it's time for presbyteries to start thinking outside the Scottish box and dreaming of ways to include

## STARTING CHURCHES IS TOUGH, SAYS CANADA MINISTRIES

GROWTH IN THE Presbyterian Church is largely handled by Canada Ministries, which oversees and approves new church developments, discusses growth ideas with presbyteries and hands out grants to get new congregations started. It's not an easy endeavour, and can sometimes be a bit of a game of hit-and-miss. Still, success somehow manages to eventually triumph. "It doesn't always happen, but of course we hope all new developments will become flourishing congregations," said Mathew Goslinski, administrator at Canada Ministries.

The road to starting a new congregation — not including building a new physical structure — is a long one. Although circumstances vary, it takes about two years to go from the "light bulb" phase to putting a minister in place. The initiative to try something new usually

comes from presbyteries, although Canada Ministries will sometimes plant a seed in a presbytery where community growth is occurring. The two parties then discuss the feasibility of the endeavour, and the presbytery is sent off to conduct research on the area's existing demographics, presence of other churches and community development. Purchasing property for a church is generally not a factor at this point, as the funds simply are not available. "You have to picture the situation," said Goslinski. "There's nothing in place at this stage. There's no congregation to even pay for a minister."

That's why Canada Ministries will give a five-year grant to new congregations to pay for a minister, cover rental costs where services will be held, advertising and other incidental expenses. Other than stipend and benefits for the minister, Canada Min-

istries does not stipulate what the congregation can use the grant for. Grants usually range from \$65,000 to \$75,000 a year and can be extended if a congregation wants to buy property for a building.

Only recently have congregations started to buy land at the beginning of the process — and this is only done where it makes good economic sense to scoop up land while it's cheap. In Alberta, for instance, some land has been bought in anticipation of starting new congregations in the Edmonton and/or Calgary areas, even though nothing has been finalized. "They have plans to start," said Goslinski. "It won't lay empty long. Still, a new building could be a long time in coming. They have to find the people first."

Vancouver and the Greater Toronto Area pose a greater challenge to starting new congregations because of the cost in-

## **'WE SHOULDN'T GIVE UP ON MAINSTREAM SOCIETY, BUT ETHNIC CONGREGATIONS ARE A WONDERFUL GIFT TO THE CHURCH. THEY BRING TREMENDOUS ENERGY THAT WE'RE IN NEED OF'**

these growing ethnic populations. "I would venture to guess that our greatest growth in the church right now is in churches that look to particular ethnic communities," he said, adding that specifically targeting other cultures isn't necessarily the best strategy, but rather learning not to ignore them. "If we wait to start a new church that's filled with Scottish/Irish Presbyterians, we may have a long wait. However, Canada is now a large mission field. There are more than enough of all backgrounds to involve in new churches."

He said Korean, Chinese, Caribbean, Arabic and African (particularly Ghanaian) communities offer some of the best prospects for growth. "The point is that Canada is becoming more diverse, and the church needs to reflect that diversity," he said, "and increasingly it does."

The large Ghanaian church in Toronto draws people from outside its immediate neighbourhood, becoming what Haynes calls a destination rather than community church. "Other multicultural congregations do the same thing," he said. "They come to a place because they speak their language, they do things they recognize and they feel comfortable. They see the church as a community centre, as a place they're tied to. They share meals, talk about their children and care for each other."

The move towards large churches serving even larger areas is a trend Haynes thinks will continue. "It will have to," he said. "We can't afford to put a church in every community

anymore. So instead of five Ghanaian churches in Toronto, we have one big one."

The United Church of Canada, with a membership of more than 600,000, reports having some hot spots for growth in Calgary, Victoria and areas north of Toronto. Glenn Smith, program officer for Congregational Mission and Evangelism at the United Church, said there are also "lively conversations" happening in Edmonton, Mississauga, Oakville and Burlington.

Richard Choe, executive minister for Ethnic Ministries at the UCC, said the church is trying to promote cultural diversity in its congregations, rather than focusing on a specific ethnic group to build a new church around. "By encouraging diversity, we're saying you don't have to be somebody in particular. Come as you are. We'll work with you so you can find a place where you impact us and we can impact you."

He said cultural diversity shouldn't be an end in itself, but a means of furthering the ministry of Christ. He said the United Church has experienced an influx of immigrants from mainland China. They often join white congregations, rather than those with large Chinese contingents, saying for them, it represents becoming Canadian. "But how do we provide services for minorities? You can't assume a Christian background anymore. You have to start from scratch, and that impacts the larger church community."

Although it's the largest Protestant denomination in

involved. Edmonton, Halifax and Winnipeg (traditionally not huge growth areas for Presbyterians), are all trying to get new things going.

One of the greatest challenges in establishing new congregations is finding a minister. "Finding a good, experienced minister for a new church is tough," said Goslinski. "You can't parachute anyone in. They need a certain skill set."

According to Gordon Haynes, associate secretary at Canada Ministries, a good self-image, a self-starting personality, a willingness to take risks, extensive knowledge and understanding of the church and an ability to move from having a vision to realizing it are essential.

Further constraints are placed on growth when the department can only do so much because of finances. "We handle all we can, so even if there was more presbytery concern, it would be hard to meet their needs," said Goslinski. "We have to

work within our budget, so we only start a couple a year," noting that no new developments were planned for 2005.

"There's no scientific formula for developing churches," he continued. "You can

look at the communities that are expanding and go to the presbytery to discuss it. But the presbytery has to do the leg work. They're on the ground. It just makes sense." —AM

### **THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BUILDING CORPORATION**

does not have a direct influence on church growth, but they do help facilitate this process by arranging loans. Congregations wishing to expand, revamp or remodel existing facilities can apply for financial assistance, as can a congregation hoping for a new building since outgrowing its old one. Young congregations that have decided to stop renting and create a place of their own can also apply. "We're like a service station that provides the lubricant," said James Seidler, PCBC's general manager. "We're there to facilitate the life and perhaps growth of the church when people determine they want to build but don't have all the money they need to do so."

Although many factors are considered when granting a loan, assistance from PCBC is not dependent upon grants and loans from Canada Ministries, which is the main body responsible for guiding new congregations through development. The corporation caps its loans at \$1 million, and granting loans is dependent on a good credit rating.



Canada, the United Church experienced an 8.2 per cent decline in numbers between 1991 and 2001 according to Statistics Canada. Liberal attitudes towards homosexual ordination and marriage are often cited as the catalysts for emptying pews. But just like the Presbyterian Church, planning for growth is still an active endeavour.

New church development is a presbytery responsibility in the United Church as well. The national church is mainly there to discuss and provide loans. Grants for new church developments are rare. This hands-off approach is complemented by presbyteries themselves (which often have funds to loan new churches) and by regional bodies. In Toronto, the Toronto United Church Extension Council buys and holds land for new congregations to purchase, provides technical support regarding development, building and municipal requirements and gives advice to developing congregations whenever asked.

The Toronto diocese of the Anglican Church has an ambitious and comprehensive growth strategy that helps monitor, encourage, foresee and pinpoint growth. It is meant to help them determine where their ministry might be effective in the future. The diocese spent a year and a half collecting reams of data and is now busy analyzing the results. A large map plotted with all 238 parishes in the diocese reveals detailed information. Varying colours, graphics and shapes indicate where Anglicans who identified themselves as such on the national census currently live, what the future population growth of the area will be, the type of churches already in place (regional, community, neighbourhood or rural), and whether attendance at those churches has dipped, plummeted, remained steady or grown.

The current challenge is getting the information out to congregations, helping bishops interpret it, deciding where to

go next and determining what resources are needed to get there. Exhaustive charts and tables sent to each parish detail municipal plans for their area, Statistics Canada information regarding church affiliation, ethnic background and age of their communities, parish statistics regarding givings, attendance and age and a comparison of the age of the population in the area in relation to the age of the congregation. The information shows parishes what they're doing right and what they need to improve.

In the past, growth was generally handled locally. Usually, a congregation would notice a need for a new church, and some parishioners would simply break off to start one. "Because of the speed and magnitude of population growth in Toronto, the radical shifts in culture and the very real decline in church attendance, we have to be more strategic and coordinated when it comes to growth, with input from top-down and bottom-up," said Rev. Canon Dawn Davis, director of Ministry Resources at the diocese.

Municipal ideas regarding city development, therefore, are of particular interest to the church. "It's certainly in our sights, and we're going to cooperate with it," said Davis. "The official plan will affect how we do church. Church is different in the suburbs than in a low-income area or in a high-rise neighbourhood. The official plan gives us the context, so we need to reflect on that and see where our ministry will be suitable."

A growing Presbyterian congregation in New Minas, Nova Scotia, is the result of similar foresight. Created in 1990 by a small group of locals who wanted a Presbyterian church in the area, it was accepted as a new church development by the national church three years later. The congregations' second and current minister, Rev. Tim Archibald, arrived in 1995. They had their own building in 2000. As their grant from Canada Ministries ends in 2007, they are almost finished being labeled as a new church development. Their journey from being a congregation of 30 people when Archibald arrived to the current group of about 115 has involved a change of focus and a new approach to growth.

"It used to be a group of tried and true Presbyterians, and that's what they looked for to grow," said Archibald. "If that continued, they would have stayed the same. So they began to open up to the wider community, recognizing they have something to offer to people from other traditions or those with no church background."

Archibald said they started to reach out to young couples with children, and making visitors feel at home. "Kids can be kids here without anyone looking sideways at them. It made an impact and people began telling others. One gift of a



The Toronto diocese of the Anglican Church conducted an ambitious study of its 238 parishes and their surrounding communities. This map plots exactly where growth is or might occur, where things are stable and where decline has set in.

new church to the wider community is that it's open and willing to receive new people."

This openness is one thing Archibald loves about being part of a new church, recognizing that more established congregations often struggle with change and incorporating new ideas. The task of creating something new, dreaming up ways to reach out to the community, and not being stifled by cries of "we've never done it that way before" energizes Archibald and his parishioners. It is this willingness to experiment with a new approach that Archibald attributes to the congregation's health and expanding size.

Reaching out to ethnic communities is something Archibald sees as a great growth strategy. "The face of new church development is changing in Canada," he said. "We shouldn't give up on mainstream society, but ethnic congregations are a wonderful gift to the church. They bring tremendous energy that we're in need of."

Ideally, Archibald would like to see the national church play a bigger role in the growth process. "I would like to see

more of a plan," he said. "We invest a lot of power in presbyteries, and in some presbyteries, new church development is happening. And the support is great. It's very difficult to get off the ground without it." But in presbyteries where growth isn't a specific focus, developing new congregations can be forgotten. A national plan and more training given to ministers and presbyteries, especially when it comes to helping ministers in a new church environment, are improvements Archibald thinks are needed.

Despite the difficulties, Archibald loves being part of a still-developing congregation. He said continually "living on the edge of existence" is what makes new congregations so special. Whether it's just getting started and trusting the money won't run out, justifying your existence to the wider church, or making a huge investment in a new building, the perils of starting something new have a way of strengthening the faith of those involved. "It's about taking risks in big ways," said Archibald, "and seeing God come through in big ways. ☞

## MAKING ROOM FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP

### Toronto's new city plan broadening its vision

WHEN SECULAR SOCIETY doesn't give churches their due, it is churches that tend to fight for recognition. This is exactly what the Toronto diocese of the Anglican Church did when it appealed Toronto's official plan for failing to specifically mention places of worship. The appeal (along with 162 others from various organizations) was heard by the Ontario Municipal Board which accepted the diocese's modifications. Because other appeals have yet to be heard, a final decision approving the church settlement could take a year or more, but the contingent order is still a victory for churches.

"Churches can now expand and build in the GTA as needs and demands determine," said Brian Mills, director of Planning and Development at the Toronto diocese. "All of us have benefited. We're pleased to share this with everyone."

The story begins with the church noticing that places of worship were not expressly included in the plan. Their original complaints to city council were met with reassurances that places of worship were indeed part of the plan (despite not being mentioned) and not to worry about it.

They managed to motivate an addition to the plan's preamble, which sets out the vision for the city. The vision now includes religion as an integral part of life in Toronto. The plan now states: "Our future is one where people enjoy freedom of conscience and religion and opportunities for such enjoyment are supported."

"We weren't satisfied with [just] that," said J. Pitman Patterson, the church's legal counsel.

So the diocese set out to change the more technical aspects of

land planning, which they took directly to the OMB. They argued that especially in areas of rapid growth, potential places of worship should be given just as much consideration as new schools.

If places of worship weren't specifically mentioned, Mills said it could have caused headaches down the road when a church wanted to put up a new building. If there were any opposition, the development could be appealed and prohibited. "The official plan earmarked 25 per cent of the GTA for growth," said Mills. "We wanted to make sure that we are represented in those areas."

The official plan was adopted by city council in November 2002, and sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval the following spring. The OMB issued its preliminary decision regarding the church's appeal in May 2005. Places of worship are now mentioned specifically in the plan, being grouped under the umbrella term "local institutions" which also includes things like schools, libraries, hospitals and retirement homes.

The hearings were generally amicable, with city officials eventually agreeing to give churches their due. Paul Bain, project manager for the planning team, told the *Record* that places of worship "were always part of the city plan." He said faith buildings are allowed anywhere except in public parks and the interior of industrial areas.

"We want to make it clear that places of worship are valued," said Bain. "We had a good discussion about it and everyone agreed that we should do this. It was really about wanting more recognition of the roles places of worship play in the community." — AM



# CERTAINLY A LOT GOING ON HERE

Building a new church means saying welcome home before the people show up

by Glenn Ball

**T**he oil patch is pumping out more black gold than ever before and the refineries are working over time since the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico as we at Sherwood Park, Alta., look for the ways to proclaim that God is in the midst of all this activity. To be a new church in an area that is facing the most rapid growth in the country in terms of population, wealth and general economic strength has its joys and its challenges. Unlike many new church development projects, we were able to move into our own building amazingly quickly. Thanks to the support of Canada Ministries and money given through the Live the Vision fund we have been given a former funeral home (previously a Roman Catholic Church) in which to conduct our ministry. Most new churches do not start with a sanctuary to hold 300-plus people and we have only had that number in once, for a concert with Steve Bell. We have started to break over the 100 people mark on high Sunday mornings and our low Sundays are equal to our averages four years ago. So we know we still have a long way to go to becoming fully self supporting but it has been good to see God at work in the community.

We have been able to spend our time and effort in building programs that build-up the people of God in faith and in fellowship. One Sunday in September we held a breakfast before worship and displayed the descriptions of the fall program with sign-up sheets for all events. Half of our worshipping congregation that morning joined us for breakfast and more stayed after church. Our goal is to create a seven-day-a-week church, a place where there is always something happening to show to the community that God is active and cares for them. We do this in many ways. There are study groups meeting for four to 10 weeks at a time, after church, Monday and Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings. The women of the church meet weekly for exercise and crafts and one evening a month for fellowship. The men meet for breakfast, fellowship and to listen to speakers one Saturday a month. Our children's programs include Sunday school, a week of evening Vacation Bible School in the summer, an after school program on Wednesdays and youth group on Fridays through the school year.

We place a substantial emphasis on mission and outreach and living as the ministers of the gospel of Christ. While there is some requirement to find bodies to fit the various tasks of the church we prefer to help people find their own ministry and use their gifts to live out the kingdom of God. Having a drama teacher and a costume mistress has allowed us to have the most creative Christmas pageants. The office administrator for the Canadian Bible Society has challenged us to become involved in the Northern Alberta Bikes for Bibles Ride which we did this year with gusto against strong gusts of wind. Not because we are competitive (well actually we are) but because this is a way to proclaim that we believe firmly in the word of God having the power to transform lives. We saw that in one man who had



Jim Mazure, left, and Rev. Glenn Ball lead worship during General Assembly the Alberta way.

not ridden in years, who in his first training run threatened not to return, being the pace setter two years in a row.

A frequent comment from new comers to the church is "There certainly is a lot going on here!" That has been a very deliberate choice on our part. If we are going to become a church that is active in the community, we have to start with community events. If we want to have ministry for the whole family, there has to be something for all members of the family. People need to see a church that is anticipating their needs. From a clean and bright nursery with someone to watch their children, to wheelchair accessibility and designated parking help to say "We have been expecting you!" and "Welcome home!"

But we don't let it stop there. As a new church we are involved in seeing other new church developments take place. We do what we can by providing room and board for the summer student, office space for the presbytery VBS program and helping find property for other new church development projects. Once again it has been through the use of the gifts we have, from seeing extra space that can do ministry to a commercial realtor who has the desire to work with churches in planning their futures. We might translate Jesus' commission to the disciples in Acts 1:8 to read, "You will receive power from the Holy Spirit to be my witnesses in Sherwood Park and the Edmonton region throughout all Alberta and to the ends of the earth." We have certainly found some great power as this growing church becomes better known in the community. Through community events, through its support of other presbytery missions and in our planning for more ways in which we can touch hearts and lives for the kingdom of God. ✂

Glenn Ball is minister at Sherwood Park Presbyterian Church, in the Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland.



# PWS Developments

a newsletter of Presbyterian World Service & Development

Fall 2005

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:17

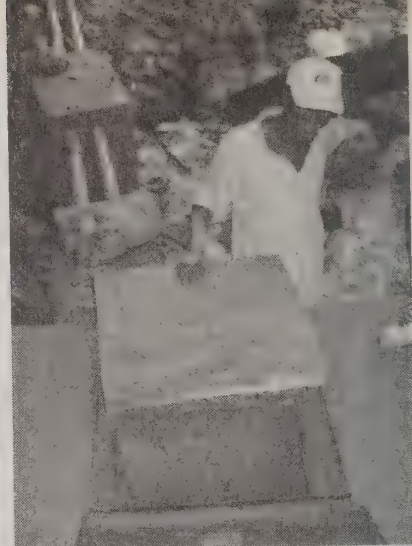
## Enough for All

This issue of *PWS Developments* focuses on how PWS&D partners are working to ensure that everyone has access to the very basic, life-sustaining right to water. PWS&D partners are helping restore water supplies after disasters. They are installing new water sources in places where no one else is providing water. Our partners are empowering communities to demand water protection and water services from companies and governments. They are advocating against privatization that makes water services inaccessible to the poor. They are working to protect and restore vital water sources.

God designed a world where everyone would have enough. Ensuring access to clean water requires addressing both the causes of water degradation and barriers preventing access to clean water — a challenge for us all.

Displaced people and the local host community have worked together, with help from Action by Churches Together, to build new wells, including this one in Darfur, Sudan. Water is a critical resource in Darfur, Sudan, and making it more available to all contributes to better relations between different social groups. [www.pws.org](http://www.pws.org)





Above: Laying the piping for the water system. Right: Capping the water source.

# A simple problem, a complex solution

By Kent Annan, ACT

Janita Lendi sits on a small wood stool in front of the crackers, candies, bread and corn seeds that she sells by the dirt roadside in Mapou, Haiti. She's wearing a vibrant multi-colored scarf tied around her head, a blue shirt and colorful skirt. "The water situation is hard, very hard, but you do what you have to do," she says with a smile that registers both resignation and defiance.

Flooding caused by heavy rains in May 2004 wiped out Janita's family's livestock and crops. Everything in their home was destroyed, except for the foundation and walls. In addition, a mediocre piping and reservoir system that provided water in the area was wiped out by the floods.

Janita has two choices for water. She can walk two hours to the nearest water source, stand in line, fill her five-gallon bucket and then return carrying the bucket on her head. Or she can pay seven Haitian gourdes (about 18 cents US) to fill her bucket when water is available from a neighbor's small reservoir. But that water is not good for drinking, and is expensive in a country where 60 percent of Haitians live on less than \$1 US/day. Janita and her family use three or four buckets a day, about 20 gallons. (The average North American uses 150 gallons a day.)

But this is about to change. Following



Janita Lendi waits for water.

the flooding, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), with the support of Action by Churches Together (ACT) members, helped provide immediate relief items. They also began to work on one of the longer-term problems – the difficulty in finding accessible, clean water.

The residents of the area knew of an excellent spring in a remote place in the mountains that could provide the water, but the terrain and technical challenges made accessing it appear impossible. "All the other engineers in the past who had studied this thought it was impossible," says Tommy Galbaud, a Haitian LWF/ACT engineer. "People in the area started having a

sort of defeated spirit about water. Water was such a big daily problem, but nobody could find a way to improve things. Our first conclusion was the same: This is impossible."

He smiles as he continues, "But before giving up, I wanted to do some final checking. The main problem was crossing a 50-metre-deep ravine. I asked people in the area if anyone might know a way to get across or around the ravine. They introduced me to an older man, Familus Marcelin. He took me up the mountain to an area covered by trees, then cut some brush away with a machete to show where the pipe could run along the mountainside. But I was still doubtful, because the path for the pipe would have to be about the same height as the source – between 800 and 850 metres. I had my GPS [global positioning system] with me and took it out to measure: 837 metres. Perfect!"

The LWF/ACT team then came up with an innovative, if somewhat daunting, plan that combined the experience and expertise of the ACT members with the intimate knowledge of the local folks.

A six-by-10 metre concrete box was built around the spring to capture the water and keep it pure. Then 8.3 kilometres of polyurethane pipe were laid to send the water down the



mountain. The parts used are as simple and fixable as possible, and the water flows down to the villages using the force of gravity, not a pump, so there is much less that can go wrong. A reforestation plan is being developed to help ensure the long-term viability of the water basin.

Delivering the needed materials required building and repairing a road, which provided jobs for local residents and will contribute to the area's long-term economic development. The pipe came in 82 pieces that weighed a total of 12,629 kilograms. Even with the road, the pipes (100 metres each) couldn't make it all the way up the mountain by truck, so they were cut in half and carried up the mountain by teams of 15 men.

Local people have been involved throughout the construction. Guerline Pierre, an engineer from the nearby town of Thiotte explains, "By involving people in the labour, we're helping them to see how the project benefits them as a community and as individuals." This is important in a country where complicated social factors, historical divisions and political conflicts threaten cooperation. By being involved, local people have also learned how the system works so they can respond to future problems that may arise.

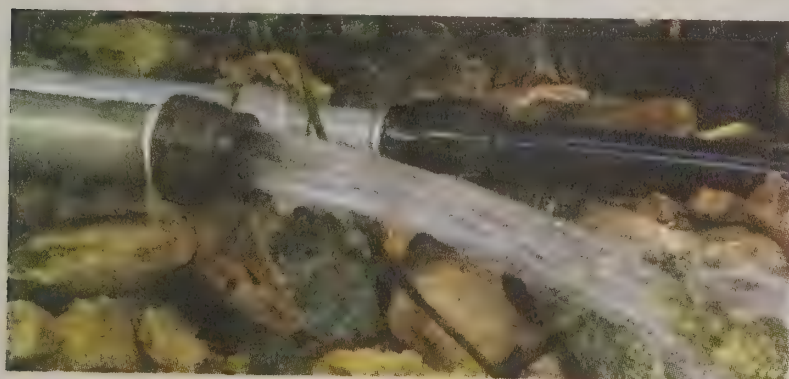
The pipes link to 19 kiosks where residents from six communities will fill their buckets. A community organizer is educating people

about the importance of clean water and preparing the communities to manage the water source and distribution system. By charging half a gourde per bucket, the project will generate an annual revenue of two million gourdes, based on annual consumption of 20 million gallons of water in all the benefiting communities. This \$50,000 US of revenue, overseen by a central committee, will provide money for maintenance and repair, and help expand the distribution network to other communities.

The water will soon arrive near the homes of Janita and 15,000 other beneficiaries. Overall the project, to this stage, will cost \$150,000 US — about \$10 per person. In addition to support from ACT members, funds came from the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Catholic Relief Services, CONCERN and OXFAM.

Janita says she has heard about the project, but her realistic nature won't let her get too excited yet. "The plan sounds great," she says. "It would be a very big help. We're praying to God that the water will come."

PWS&D has supported ACT's work in Haiti in the past year after the flooding and political conflict. Since this article was written in May 2005 water has arrived in Janita's community. LWF-Haiti continues working on bringing water to even more communities in the area.



Clean water flowing through these pipes laid by ACT will bring clean water to Mapou. photos by C. Coffey, ACT

Photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT



A well or a borehole? A hand-dug well can be dug when water is close to the surface and the ground is not too hard or rocky. It requires much community participation, which can build support for the project, and it can also take up to three months to dig a 14-metre-deep well. Capping a well with a hand pump helps protect the water quality. A well is considerably cheaper than a borehole.

A professional drill team can drill a borehole in one day. A borehole can be drilled over 20 metres deep. If the yield is good, a bladder can be set up to allow many people access to water at the same time, otherwise a hand pump will be installed. Both hand pumps and bladders require maintenance and technical skills to repair them. The water quality in boreholes is more assured.

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Editor: Karen Plater, PWS&D





# Working for Water

**Sudan.** Since June 2004, Action by Churches Together (ACT) has drilled 80 boreholes, dug 16 shallow wells and restored 40 shallow wells in Darfur, Sudan. Within, or close to, camps for internally displaced people, these water sources are often safer for women, who are at risk from rape and attack if they leave the camps to collect water. photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT



**Indonesia.** One of the three water plants in Meulaboh, Indonesia was destroyed completely in the December 26 tsunami, while the other two were badly damaged. A water and sanitation project set up by Action by Churches Together (ACT) members started to operate very soon after the tsunami. The water-purification system was installed in January on the shore of the Meurebo River, just beside the ruins of the old water plant. Water is pumped from the river in hoses to a big water basin. After being treated with chemicals, it is directed through filters to the water stores. The purification unit can produce 20,000 litres of clean water per hour and, at the moment, is producing water for more than 16,000 people. Restoring water was a first step in helping communities begin to rebuild after the tsunami.

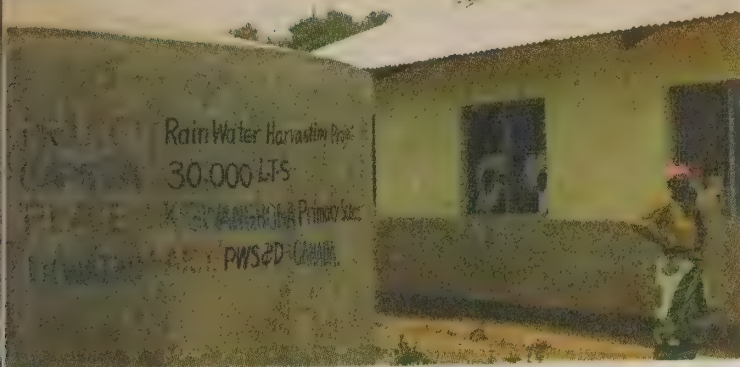
photo: Petteri Kokkonen, ACT



**Nicaragua.** In the northern province of Ocotepeque, PWS&D partner Soynica is helping families install cisterns that collect rainwater off the roof of their houses for daily chores and watering their vegetable gardens. Soynica also helps farmers establish pumps that bring water from a nearby river to fill the cisterns and irrigate their crops in the dry season.

photo: Stephanie MacDonald





**Tanzania.** In addition to constructing wells and training communities on pump operation and maintenance, PWS&D is helping The Africa Inland Church of Tanzania build rainwater tanks for schools, ensuring that students have access to clean water. Teachers report that after the tanks are installed the attendance levels at school increase. Pictured at left is the tank at Kigwanghona Primary School. photo: Bella Lam, PWS&D



**India.** PWS&D partner in the south of India – the Madurai Non-Formal Education Centre has focused on empowering women to advocate for their right to water. Women are equipped to approach their local governments to solve their water problems. In the past year, over 650 families benefited from clean water as a result of the women's advocacy efforts. photo: Guy Smagghe, PWS&D



**Malawi.** PWS&D continues to help The Livingstonia Synod of The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian provide shallow wells and deep boreholes for remote communities in northern Malawi. One of the most important things the Synod has discovered about making a well or borehole sustainable is that extensive training and community building are needed to ensure proper maintenance and repair. Water committees are established to collect modest fees for the use of the well, which are then used to maintain it. The borehole pictured above was drilled in 2004 in Chilasa village. photo: Bella Lam, PWS&D



**Canada.** KAIROS is leading an ecumenical campaign *Water: Life Before Profit!* Join the call to demand that the Government of Canada stop promoting water privatization and start supporting genuine community control and the protection and preservation of natural sources of water. Visit [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org) for more information.

**Kenya.** With the support of PWS&D, the Shauri Yako Youth Support Centre (SYSC) has reduced their water bills by installing rainwater harvesting tanks. The centre, which provides housing, education and support services for street children and orphans in Nyeri, Kenya, is the only place where many in the community can access clean water. Most of the community depends on the local river which is highly polluted.

photo: Catherine Rodd



# Water in the borderlands

By Colleen McCue, PWS&D Refugee Program Coordinator

"A couple of months ago, my wife and I hired a guy to do some work on our driveway. As soon as the crew arrived, the leader said to me, 'One of my guys wants to talk with you.' So I said OK, and the man came over to me, shook my hand, and gave me a big abrazo (hug). 'What's that all about?' I asked.

'Aren't you one of those guys who puts water out in the desert?' I said yes, I had helped with that.

And he said, 'It saved my life. I was lost, literally crawling on my hands and knees, when I came across one of your water stations, and that's the only reason I survived the desert. I just wanted to thank you.'

The Reverend Dr. John Fife, retired Presbyterian Pastor, founding member of Humane Borders. (Excerpt from Migration: Seeking God's Justice for People on the Move, Church & Society Magazine, July/August 2005, Presbyterian Church (USA), page 29)

They are a small family — a mother, father and young child — sitting in a town square in northern Mexico. The square is like many in Mexico: a central area surrounded by a cathedral, little market stalls and restaurants. However, a closer examination reveals something peculiar about this town square in Altar. The items hanging in the stalls include unusually high numbers of balaclavas, large water bottles, backpacks, heavy gloves and fingernail clippers. The square is filled mostly with young men, waiting.

Sixty miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border, Altar is one of the launching grounds for people seeking a better life in the United States. The balaclavas provide cover in the dark, the heavy gloves protect hands from barbed wire, the fingernail clippers open cans of food, and the bottles carry lifesaving water for a dangerous journey across the desert.

I am in this small town in Mexico with Borderlinks — an organization which helps North Americans understand issues of trade and globalization and the concerns of migrants on the border. Rick Ufford-Chase, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and founder of BorderLinks, is leading us on a mind-boggling journey following the migrant path through Northern Mexico.

The small family, we learn, is planning to begin their desert crossing tonight, and I am trying to figure out what this means.

From Altar we follow an unofficial, but well travelled, dirt road to Sasabe, a town on the U.S.-Mexico border. The migrants catch a ride to Sasabe from Altar, and are dropped off with maps and instructions suggesting the best places to cross the border after sunset. From Sasabe a three to four day walk through harsh desert to get to the nearest U.S. city or town awaits the migrants. They risk getting lost, running out of water, being bitten by snakes or scorpions, or being ambushed by their paid "guides". They must also avoid the U.S. border patrols equipped with helicop-

photo: Joan Maruskin



"The mother in the small family we saw in the Altar town square was only wearing a pair of flimsy flip-flops for her journey across the desert. Before we left, a Spanish speaker in our group told her that she could get a pair of sturdy shoes at the migrant centre run by the Catholic Church around the corner."

— Colleen McCue

ters, four-wheel drive vehicles, infra-red cameras, night vision goggles and guns.

Up to 1,500 people arrive in Altar daily to start their migrant journey. In the two-hour period on the road to Sasabe we pass 70 vans, five buses and one taxi on their way back to Altar after dropping off their passengers at the border. At about \$1,000 US each person, for the ride and information, the vehicles we have passed, represent a human trafficking economy of about \$800,000 US. And this is only one route to the U.S., on one day, in one two-hour period. How bad is it at home if a deadly desert crossing and a life of hard work under cover seemed like the only alternative?

We easily cross the U.S. border at dusk. With my Canadian passport it is an effortless crossing. The sun is going down and

## God's People:

### A People on the Move.

A series of fact-sheets developed by KAIROS to promote reflection on migrant issues in Canada is available from PWS&D. Geared to adults and older youth, the 10 fact sheets are ideal for bible studies, coffee hour discussions or Sunday school classes.

the Arizona desert sky is aglow with brilliant oranges, reds and yellows. Well beyond Sasabe I scan the horizon for the identification marker I have been told to look for. It suddenly appears amidst the silhouettes of crazy cacti and rocky outcrops: a simple blue flag atop a 30-foot-high flagpole.

The flag marks the location of three plastic barrels — once Coca-Cola syrup containers — painted blue with the word 'agua' (water) written on the side. The barrels are fitted with spigots and stand on steel legs. The flag marks life for people on a deadly journey.

Paul Fuscini, a volunteer with Humane Borders, explains that over the past two years Humane Borders, a faith-based organization in Arizona, has provided more than 65,000 gallons of life-saving water to migrants crossing the Arizona borderlands. Over 70 water stations are maintained by hundreds of volunteers who regularly check them to ensure the safety of the water and to pick up the collection of personal items left behind by the migrants. In addition to providing clean water, the people at Humane Borders work equally hard to advocate for migrants and workers' rights.

More than 2,000 men, women, and children have died trying to cross the Mexican border into the U.S. since 1998. In July 2001, struck by the extreme magnitude of these deaths, the Pima County Board of Supervisors in Southern Arizona declared the situation a public health disaster. In the past year more than 257 migrants have died in the Arizona desert. In September 2005, Pima County supervisors voted to support Humane Borders' water stations with a grant of \$25,000 US, after hearing that it costs the county \$300,000 US annually to recover and deal with the bodies of migrants who die in their jurisdiction. (Tucson Citizen, September 7, 2005).

Humane Borders has collaborated with the U.S. Border Patrol and Mexican Consulate to develop a detailed map marking the location of every migrant known to have died in the region.

Almost all are along footpaths that stretch north through the desert wilderness. With this information, they approach government and private land owners to offer a strategy for water stations aimed at curbing the fatalities. The U.S. Border Patrol has agreed not to stake out these lifelines.

Migrants who cross the border like this often end up working in garment factories, agriculture, construction and service industries. They are willing to do jobs that many Americans will not do, at wages many Americans will not accept.

Migration is often a survival mechanism. People are often uprooted by forces beyond their control — free trade policies which have destroyed the livelihoods of small farmers and entrepreneurs, an environmental disaster, or a mine or dam which has forced them from their land. I wonder what would happen if all of the money spent on sneaking people across the border and preventing people from crossing the border, could be spent on resolving the issues that push people to cross the desert in the first place. It seems ironic to me that so many of these migrants reflect so much of the American work ethic, the American dream. And I wonder, is it appropriate for me to receive all of the benefits of the global economy without any of the responsibility for it?

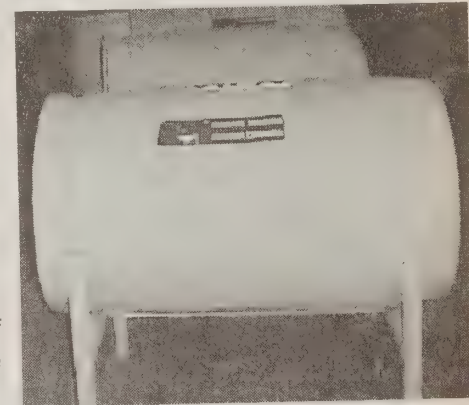
Paul holds up a small, yellow t-shirt he had found the previous week checking a water station. He had taken it home and his wife had washed it, mistaking it for one of their grandchildren's. More and more, he explains, among the things discarded at the water stations, are items like this one, clearly belonging to young children. I think of the family from the square in Altar and wondered if they will find water on their dangerous journey.

In April 2005, Colleen McCue visited Arizona and Northern Mexico as part of a conference organized by the Presbyterian Church (USA) entitled "Death and Life on the Border: A Faith-Based Response."

Jesus, full of love and mercy,  
watch over our sister and brother migrants. Have compassion and protect them as they suffer mistreatment and humiliation along their way, as they encounter distrust and marginalization.

Touch with your goodness the hearts of all those who see them pass by. Help us to respect them and treat them with dignity. Take care of their families until they return home. Grant them the grace to return safely, not with broken hearts but with their hopes fulfilled.

Prayer on the wall of the Community Centre for Migrants in Altar, Mexico



A water station maintained by Humane Borders for migrants crossing the desert.

photo: Starr Luteri-Hicks and David Hicks

PWS&D is supporting **No More Deaths**, a coalition of communities and individuals of faith and conscience working to end the suffering and deaths of migrants in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands by supporting migrant aid centres, maintaining water stations, convening patrols that search the desert for migrants in need and advocating on behalf of migrant-related issues.





## Still much work to do

Even though the food crisis in Niger has faded from the headlines, there is still much work to do. Kathryn Wolford, a member of the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Emergency Committee, returned recently from Niger, where she visited communities where food was distributed with the support of ACT members, including Presbyterian World Service & Development.

"I am pleased to report that due to our incredible partners, staff and supporters, ACT was among the first aid agencies to get food distributed to severely affected communities in Niger," she commented.

Wolford saw that for some the aid was still too little and too late. The therapeutic feeding center in Dakoro had 2,700 severely malnourished babies and their mothers, and the numbers were still climbing. "It is heart-wrenching to talk to mothers who are themselves suffering from malnutrition—holding six-month-old babies who look like one-month-olds," Wolford commented. She added, "Even as we answer today's urgent need for food distribution, we are working with the partners and communities on ways to rebuild their assets and ability to with-



A new well, constructed with ACT's help.  
photo: Daniel Auf Der Mauer, ACT

stand future droughts and fluctuations in market prices, and the resulting hunger these generate."

Wolford talked about the resiliency and pride of the people of Niger, "I was particularly struck by the members of one community that had been incredibly hard hit by the current food crisis. Even though the people had virtually no food left in their homes, they told us that they would die before they would steal from one another."

Describing the food distributions she witnessed, Wolford said, "I was incredibly impressed with our partners' ability to distribute food in ways that respected the dignity of the people."

Displaced by surging crowds, these women patiently await their families' allotment of the emergency food distribution funded by the Action by Churches Together.

She continued, "While it is clear that the first food distributions have helped many people avoid starvation, there is still much to do. While the October harvest should be good, farmers had to borrow money to grow their current crops. They've essentially already 'sold' their October crops on a futures market, and not at good prices, just to be able to buy enough food to feed their families." Building on a 30-year history in Niger, ACT member Lutheran World Relief will continue to address immediate needs, while also working with partners to develop and implement innovative development strategies that can stave off future food crises.

In addition, with the support of ACT members, Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS) is working on a food-for-work program to reach at least 50,000 people in 20 villages. The program will help construct wells and grain banks and emphasize the long-term protection of resources.

— based on reports from ACT



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# The resistance of the believing soul

*Bonhoeffer represented 'moral and political revolt against injustice and cruelty'*

BY ARTHUR VAN SETERS

## Ethics

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ilse Tödt, translator  
Clifford J. Green, editor

### The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint

Stephen R. Haynes

both from Fortress Press

**Y**ears ago when I watched the movie *Schindler's List*, I wondered how a ranking

German officer came to be such a courageous man of conscience in saving a thousand Polish Jews from the fate of Hitler's final solution. What propels a person to live out ethical principles when the stakes are so high and the prevailing culture so seductive?

Under the pressure of the moment, what is the ethically responsible action for any of us? A medical operation, a business decision, a violent act of terror, each in its own way requires a response. For Christians, individually and collectively, how does this response reflect true discipleship?

At a London memorial service, shortly after Bonhoeffer was hanged at the concentration camp in Flossenbürg, Germany on April 9, 1945, Bishop George Bell stated that Bonhoeffer represented "both the resistance of the believing soul, in the name of God, to the assault of evil, and also the moral and political revolt of the human conscience against injustice and cruelty." Under momentous circumstances fraught with extraordinary danger and against much of his own socialization to be loyal to the state, Bonhoeffer manifested an integrity that combined thought and deed, belief and action.

Bonhoeffer, even at the young age of



39, left a monumental legacy in his unfinished magnum opus, *Ethics*. Although it was originally published in Germany in 1949 (and again in 1963 and 1992), many have found it difficult to understand. This new edition (and translation) makes Bonhoeffer's thought far more accessible, especially with the help of both a lengthy Editor's Introduction and Afterword.

In his popular *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), Bonhoeffer reflected on the Sermon on the Mount and resistance to Nazism. The words of Jesus about loving our enemies, he believed, called for a repudiation of the use of violence and a consistent advocacy of peace. This did not, however, prevent his involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler, to stop what he called "a life-destroyer." He had to consider very seriously the peculiar kind of responsibility that in certain situations consciously accepts unavoidable guilt. He admitted that acting responsibly entailed being legally and morally guilty even when this action was based on a conscience liberated by Christ. He explains that the person "who acts out of free responsibility is justified before others by dire necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience, but before God he hopes only for grace." It is this spiritual struggle and candor that

makes the reader want to explore ethical reflection more deeply.

The reconciling work of Jesus Christ and Christian responsibility in society is at the very centre of *Ethics*. Bonhoeffer understood that God's will and the reality of the world are inseparable and lead to God's affirmation and also critique of the world. People sometimes lose the capacity for seeing reality clearly, especially under the pressure of ruthless power. This incapacity, Bonhoeffer said, cannot be remedied by instruction but only by freedom that comes through faith in Christ.

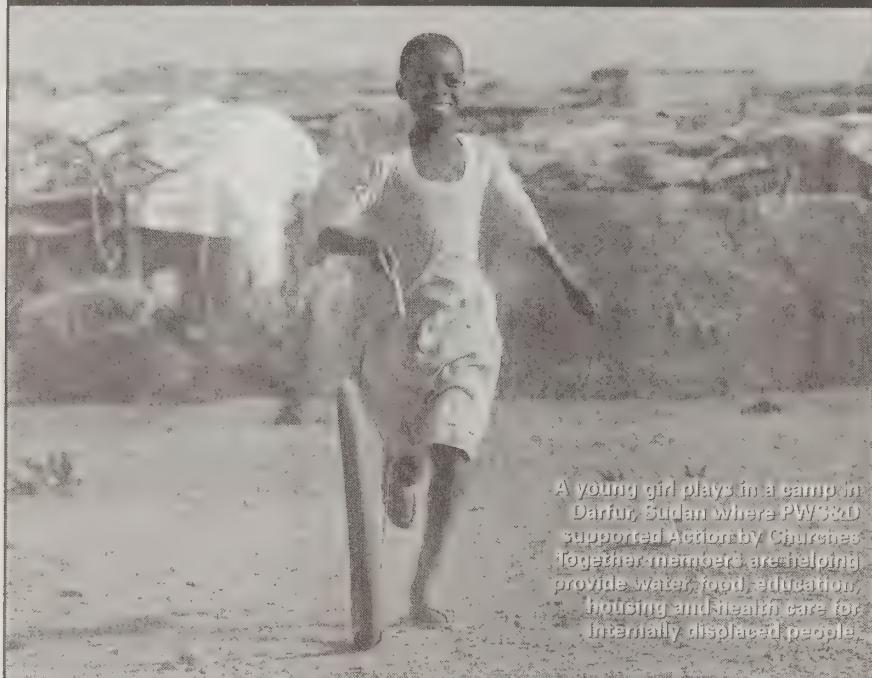
Bonhoeffer was a professor of theology but also a pastor and wrote out of concern for people having to make difficult choices. In the midst of conflict, is *the other* the enemy or another human being? Bonhoeffer wanted ethics to be concretely related to the present. We are not only responsible to God we are also responsible in the very places where life shapes the larger society.

The atrocities of the Third Reich led Bonhoeffer to discuss issues of euthanasia, marriage, contraception, abortion, sterilization and suicide. Taken out of the context of those war years these discussions become distorted. Bonhoeffer was articulating ethical action in the face of National Socialism, not providing universal principles.

We all read classic works out of our own contexts and sometimes distort both what is written and who we understand the writer to be. Stephen Haynes, who teaches religion at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, admits as much. In his thought-provoking *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon* he begins with his own way of viewing Bonhoeffer. As an Evangelical Christian in college, Haynes saw



# Give the Gift of Hope



A young girl plays in a camp in Darfur, Sudan where PWS&D supported Action by Churches Together members are helping provide water, food, education, housing and health care for internally displaced people.

PAUL JEFFREY, ACT

Every year, with the support of Canadian Presbyterians, PWS&D partners work tirelessly to share hope with people living in some of the most difficult circumstances in the world. They deliver relief in times of catastrophic disaster. They help address long-term needs through sustainable community development. They walk alongside communities working against human rights abuses and injustice.

## HOPE – A GIFT YOU CAN GIVE.

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Bonhoeffer as a committed disciple of Christ. Later when he was on a secular university campus, Bonhoeffer appeared to be a theological visionary. At the time of Haynes' ordination Bonhoeffer seemed to be a theological liberal prophet. Finally as a professor specializing in Jewish Holocaust studies Bonhoeffer was seen as a person who sought to revise the church's historic misapprehension of the Jewish people.

So Haynes sets out "to illuminate the contours of the Bonhoeffer phenomenon." In the early 1970s some saw Bonhoeffer as a radical critic of religion but failed to note the connection between his ethics and the terrible social upheaval of the 1930s and early '40s. Others saw him as a seer, able to perceive the future with uncanny prescience, or a prophet committed to following Christ in his own time. But many of his thoughts were not so transparent given the conditions under which he wrote and his actions did not always fit with what prophetic voices claimed were prophetic.

While popular in mainline and ecumenical settings, Bonhoeffer has also been hailed by many evangelicals. They saw him as an apostle, a conservative who called for steadfastness of the faith handed down from the Early Church and the Reformers. For him, the person and reconciling work of Christ are central to the development of ethics. But Bonhoeffer's notions of biblical interpretation and his engagement in ecumenical and peace movements would seem to move counter to much in evangelicalism.

Reading Haynes' analysis along side Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* suggests that we would do better by testing our perceptions of ethics by direct engagement with his writings. Moral behaviour is not so easily transferable through some imitation of another's actions. Bonhoeffer would be the first to emphasize the crucial importance of facing the demands and possibilities of a particular moment. What he gives us, however, is the rigorous process of serious theological reflection that sends us back to the most basic questions of all, how can we act in such a way as to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ? *✠*

Arthur Van Seters is a past moderator of the Presbyterian Church.

# An Oprah moment

*The Oprah Syndrome on display in Louisiana*

**T**he first question is why Celine Dion was on the Larry King show at all. Presumably Larry's team of producers did not sit around all day discussing who would be the most astute commentator on the New Orleans disaster, settling not on a state governor or a Nobel laureate engineer but on a singer from Quebec.

Surely the initiative came from Celine's people. Which raises the question of why on earth the lady who gave us show tunes from the sinking of the *Titanic* really thought that we wanted to hear her opinions of the search and rescue policies of the United States government.

That she cried and shouted and became so visibly upset was embarrassing to some, energizing to others. But what it really came down to is best described as the Oprah Syndrome. Celine Dion is not in any way a bad woman but she believes that as a celebrity she has an automatic right, even a responsibility and a duty, to express her feelings about a public tragedy.

The Oprah Syndrome and an Oprah moment. I feel something and I am famous, thus it has to be important. Just as a movie star's baby is the first baby ever born, a singer's romance the first and greatest romance ever, the fashion model's struggle with disease the first and most difficult struggle with disease ever.

Just to make sure that we knew we were dealing with genuine goodness here, Celine then told us that she had given \$1million to the cause but that, naturally, this wasn't in the least bit im-

portant. Then why did you make this act of altruism known?

And nobody does an Oprah moment better than, well Oprah. Hardly had Celine taken a breath than Oprah, Sean Penn and their friends were posing for the cameras as they hugged people in New Orleans. No mention of the fact that the assembled bodyguards and

singing is not really what is required and comes across as being just a little crass and exploitative.

As a culture we have come to revere feelings rather than thought. We weep for people we see on television whom we have never met but cannot name the person who lives three doors away and have no idea of their pain, needs and fears.

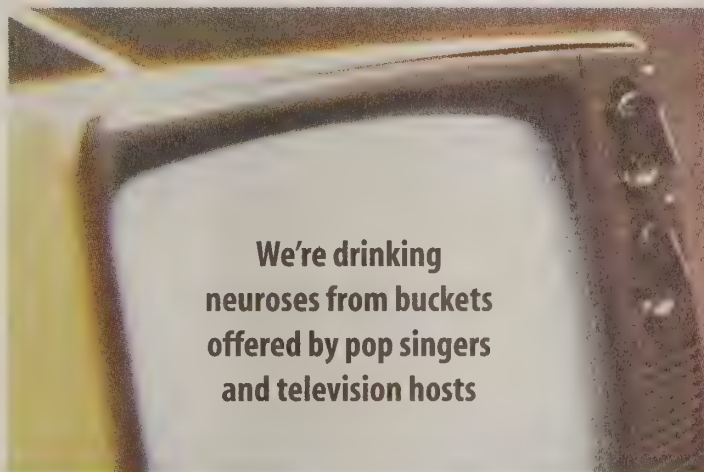
It's the same sensibilities behind the mass pilgrimages to spots where people have been murdered. The entire event is a happening, something that gives us a sense of meaning and inclusion. We have vicariously felt the flame of fame.

The recent scenes of entire crowds of people weeping on the anniversary of the death of Princess Diana says it all really. One almost expected Celine

Dion to step forward and sing a ballad in the woman's memory.

Not cynical but realistic. We're drinking neuroses from buckets offered by pop singers and television hosts. The fact is that human suffering in the developing world, human misery in our own inner-cities, social injustice and the abuse of wealth and privilege have to be criticised most of all by Christians. Celebrities such as Bono do this with wit, gravity and balance.

Not Celine Dion. Not this time. For me she joins President Bush, the Governor of Louisiana, the Mayor of New Orleans and many others who let down the least fortunate of the American people. ☹



television crews actually disrupted the rescue operation.

As for Celine, she was particularly unwise to criticize the Bush government's failure to master logistics and deliver aid to New Orleans earlier than it did. Unwise because she was the only person at the Live 8 concert in Ontario who was not there in person. Her people could not master the logistics of flying her private jet from Las Vegas.

At the end of her performance for caring Larry and the caring Larry watchers she sang. Perfectly. The tears stopped and the voice took over. Too planned, too contrived, too Celine and Larry. Too awful.

The best people I have known have done their crying in private and perform their acts of charity behind the scenes and often in complete anonymity. Nor do they sing for the suffering when, frankly,

---

Michael Coren is a broadcaster, author and speaker. Visit his website at [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).





# A fork in the road

*A homemaker's pay might be poor, but the rewards are countless*

I have been a husband for nearly 10 years now, so needless to say I know virtually everything there is to know about my wife's needs. For instance, I know that she can get by without food for 40 days and 40 nights, but definitely not without chocolate. I also know that she needs clean laundry, flowers, nurturing, romance, protection, a listening ear and clothes that fit. Whereas my basic needs are...well, pizza.

I arrived home from work recently, expecting pizza, knowing my wife would be waiting there, attentive to my every need. But in the kitchen Ramona was halfway inside the dishwasher. The table was piled high with laundry and the stove held not even a hint of supper. I made a mistake then. I asked, "Soooooooo...what did you do today?"

Ramona stands up straight, brandishing a sharp fork. "What did I do today?" She walks swiftly across the room—still holding the fork. "WHAT DID I DO TODAY?" She hands me a piece of paper. And stands over me as I read:

## WHAT I DID TODAY

3:21 a.m. – Woke up. Took Jeffrey to bathroom.  
3:31 a.m. – Woke up. Took Jeffrey back to bed.  
3:46 a.m. – Got you to quit snoring.  
3:49 a.m. – Went to sleep.  
5:11 a.m. – Woke up. Took Jeffrey to bathroom.  
6:50 a.m. – Alarm went off. Mentally reviewed all I had to do today.  
7:00 a.m. – Alarm went off. Contemplated doing something violent to alarm clock.  
7:19 a.m. – Got up. Got dressed. Made bed. Warned Stephen.  
7:19 a.m. – Warned Stephen.  
7:21 a.m. – Spanked Stephen. Held Stephen. Prayed with Stephen.

7:29 a.m. – Fed boys a breakfast consisting of Cheerios, orange juice and something that resembled toast. Scolded Jeffrey for mixing them.

7:35 a.m. – Woke Rachael.

7:48 a.m. – Had devotions.

7:49 a.m. – Made Stephen's lunch. Tried to answer Jeffrey's question "Why does God need people?" Warned Stephen.

8:01 a.m. – Woke Rachael.

8:02 a.m. – Started laundry.

8:03 a.m. – Took rocks out of washing machine.

8:04 a.m. – Started laundry.

8:13 a.m. – Planned grocery list. Tried to answer Jeffrey's question "Why do we need God?"

8:29 a.m. – Woke Rachael (third time).

8:30 a.m. – Helped Stephen with homework.

8:31 a.m. – Sent Stephen to school. Told him to remember his lunch.

8:32 a.m. – Had breakfast with Rachael. Porridge.

Rest of morning—took Stephen's lunch to him. Returned library books. Explained why a cover was missing. Mailed letters. Bought groceries. Shut TV off. Planned birthday party. Cleaned house. Wiped noses. Wiped windows. Wiped bottoms. Shut TV off. Cleaned spaghetti out of carpet. Cut bite marks off the cheese. Made funny-shaped sandwiches. Ate one. Yuck.

12:45 p.m. – Agreed to babysit for a friend. Cut tree sap out of Rachael's hair. Regretted babysitting decision. Killed assorted insects. Read to the kids. Clipped ten fingernails. Sent kids outside. Unpacked groceries. Watered plants. Swept floor. Picked watermelon seeds off linoleum. Read to the kids.

3:43 p.m. – Stephen came home. Warned Stephen.

3:46 p.m. – Put Band-Aids on knees.

Organized task force to clean kitchen. Cleaned parts of house. Accepted appointment to local committee (secretary said, "You probably have extra time since you don't work"). Tried to answer Rachael's question "Why are boys and girls different?" Listened to a zillion more questions. Answered a few. Cleaned out dishwasher. Briefly considered supper. Briefly considered running away.

5:21 p.m. – Husband came home looking for peace, perfection and pizza.

I am finished reading now, but Ramona is still holding the fork. "Of course, not all my days go this smoothly," she says. "Any questions?"

Often when Ramona and I are at public gatherings, she is asked The Question: "Do you work?" I'm glad she is not holding a fork at this point. Sometimes I wish she'd say, "Actually I work days, nights, and weekends. How about you?" But she doesn't. She's a kind woman. Once, however, she told me that she wishes she had the eloquence to respond as one woman did: "I am socializing three homo sapiens in the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition in order that they might be instruments for the transformation of the social order into the teleologically prescribed utopia inherent in the eschaton."

Then she would ask, "And what is it you do?"

"I'm a lawyer" just isn't all that overpowering then.

If you are a homemaker, let me encourage you: No one on earth can shape the mind of a child like his mother. The pay may be poor, but the rewards are out of this world. ☺

Phil Callaway is a popular speaker and author. You can visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

*Education feature*

# Experiencing the church

Colleges respond to the multicultural post-Christian era

By Nancy Devine

In the multicultural post-Christian era, theological schools across the country are taking a long look at how they prepare students for active ministry — changing not only the curriculum, but also how it is delivered to a widely diverse group of students.

"We are no longer preparing people to lead in the maintenance model of ministry, where they are expected to maintain the church as an institution," says John Vissers, principal of the Presbyterian College, part of the Montreal School of Theology at McGill University. "We are moving more toward a missionary model because churches and their leaders are facing all kinds of challenges in our post-Christian culture."

Because of this shift in culture, he says theological students heading toward ordination must now be prepared to take up stronger leadership roles. Schools are making a more conscious effort to marry theology courses such as Biblical and ethical studies with practical experience in counselling and leadership.

To that end, third-year students take a mandatory seven- to 10-day mission trip so they can experience the church in a different culture.

"We want them to experience the church outside of Canada, and determine how that experience can inform the church in here," says Vissers. "In previous years, we have gone to Mexico, and, this coming year, we will be going to an ecumenical seminary in Cuba."

The trip enables students to view the church from an alternate point of view, and in that broadening of perspective, the hope is they will find their own work more enriched. Students are expected to fund some of the costs themselves, but funding is also provided from the Ewart Foundation, the Presbyterian World Service and Development Fund and the Women's Missionary Society.



At the college, courses in the Ministry of Divinity program provide a solid foundation for ministry, says Vissers, but there's room to learn more.

"There's clearly an understanding that what you get in seminary is only a beginning," he says. "Increasingly, we are providing programs that are the basis for life-long learning."

It's important to continue supporting the newly ordained because, Vissers says, there is a high drop-out rate in the first five years of ministry. In helping students embrace the notion of continuous learning throughout their vocation, it's hoped they feel not only prepared to serve the church, but also supported in their work. "We feel it will lead to a more reflective practice of ministry."

Last year, about 50 clergy attended the school's continuing education events, including lectures by Miroslav Wolf of the Yale School of Divinity and Karl Moore from the Yale School of busi-



## Education feature: Experiencing the church

ness, who lectured on how to apply today's business principles to congregational leadership and church management. The continuing education program will be offered again in February 2006.

At Presbyterian College, there are about 25 students who are working toward a diploma in lay leadership, and several others are taking the course online. This distance-learning model is helping several members of the Cape Breton Presbytery in Nova Scotia develop the skills of non-stipendiary lay leadership.

Distance-learning, especially for lay education, is also gaining popularity at Knox College, part of the University of Toronto's downtown campus. Celebrating its 160th anniversary, Knox has

a diverse student population and a young enthusiastic faculty, says Barbara Hepburn, director of development.

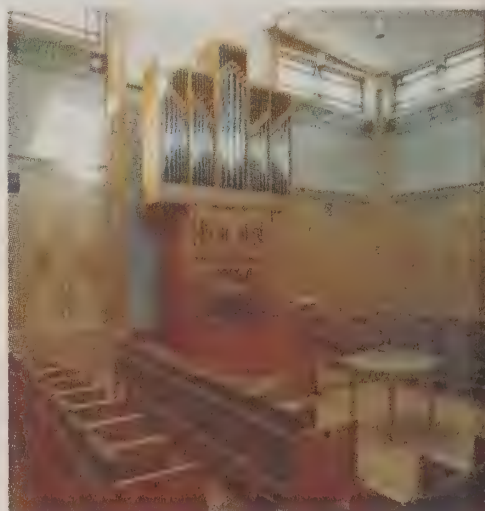
"We have a nice mix of Master of Divinity, Master of Religious Education and Master of Theological Studies students, and we're continuing the trend toward younger students, many right out of the undergraduate programs, where, not long ago, we had more people who were taking on their second career," she says. "We offer a lot of diversity, both within our programs and the student body, and with the resources of the Toronto School of Theology, there is an ecumenical focus. The students are meeting people from different places and ministry experiences."

Faculty are also researching the changing needs of Canadian churches. "The ultimate goal is to prepare the students for what they will be going into, not what's been the traditional setting in the past few years," Hepburn says. "We have to look at today's world, not yesterday's."

The encouraging sign, she adds, is that more people are coming to Knox seeking preparation for active ministry. In the past two years, the numbers have been increasing.

Knox has graduated 150 students from its lay ministry program, which is continually growing, and offers students the chance to do the course either completely online or on site. A Korean language lay education program is also offered.

"These folks are elders in the church, church school superintendents, people who are working in the church but want to be better equipped for their ministries," Hepburn says. "They are also finding the ways to incorporate their faith in everyday life."



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"We're hoping to expand the online capabilities so that people in far-flung places have the chance to study at Knox," Hepburn says. "We've been in the education business for a long time, but we're not stuck in the Dark Ages. We're looking to the future always and finding ways to expand our continuing education program to better serve those who are currently in ministry."

But it's been a slow process, says Hepburn, mostly because of funding.

"We don't have the financial resources to do it as well as we'd like to, but we're working on getting the financial resources to do more," she says. "The continuing education programs we have been able to offer are popular and they offer an opportunity to



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## Education feature: Experiencing the church

gather information about what other kinds of programs ministers need. In turn, the congregations benefit.”

Funding remains a roadblock for all theological schools across the country, says Corinne Rogers, director of development at the Vancouver School of Theology.

Officially sponsored by the Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches in Canada, VST is a multi-denominational community, with students coming from various Christian traditions.

“The United, Anglican and Presbyterian churches are able to give less and less to the colleges,” she says. “Ordination-track candidates aren’t paid for by the Anglican or United churches any-

more. The churches are changing. So we took a look at the land we have on the University of British Columbia’s campus.”

By selling off parcels of the land for development, the school is adding to its endowment fund, which will help fund renovations at Iona Building and provide needed housing for students and others in the Vancouver area.

Rogers explains the key to finding the funds was to view the school’s land as a legacy for future generations of theological students.

The development plans call for a combination of market and student housing, as well as lower-cost housing, which will result in a neighbourhood surrounding the school.

The Landmark Legacy Campaign has been established to guarantee the school’s continuing success. Individuals, families, congregations and church groups can support current endowment funds, or begin new funds for teaching chairs and student bursaries.

Iona Building is being retrofitted with a more solid structure, elevators to ensure accessibility and rewiring to enable wireless computer/communications connectivity. The building will also provide new archive space for both the United and Anglican churches in the area. Somerville House, the school’s new student residence was officially opened in April.

Rogers says this is an exciting time at VST and the improvements will help the school continue its long tradition of preparing lay people and clergy for work in the church.

“People are looking for different kinds of education, not just the traditional Master of Divinity,” she says. “We offer intensives, two weeks of course work all day, every day, which is great for people who



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PHOTO: CORINNE ROGERS (TOP),  
BRUCE JEFFREY (BOTTOM).



Top: Some of the graduates at the 2005 Vancouver School of Theology convocation. Bottom: Somerville House, a new student residence at VST.

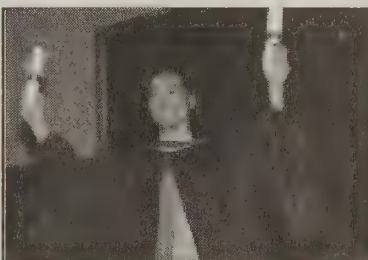
want to plan their education around their holidays. Not everyone can do two or three months to earn a credit."

VST's Chalmers Institute for Continuing Education and Congregational Development, also offers various programs throughout the year to provide lifelong learning opportunities to both clergy and laity.

Education, particularly education for ministry in the 21st century, is an ongoing process. The church, through its affiliation with seminaries across Canada, will continue looking for ways to better prepare leaders and members of their congregations.

"As we move into more of a mission model, Christian churches will face all kinds of challenges in this new culture," says Vissers. "How that all spins out — well, we will likely be looking at that from year to year for some time to come."

— Nancy Devine is a freelance writer.



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# The changing church

*West Toronto is a glimpse of the future*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



Multiculturalism isn't something one historically equates with the Presbyterian church. But the Presbytery of West Toronto is changing that. It boasts four congregations that cater to distinct groups — Ghanaian, Hungarian, Spanish and Portuguese. Several other congregations have significant multicultural contingents. They even have a church in Bermuda. "The Presbyterian church is currently holding services in 17 languages on a typical Sunday," said Gordon Haynes, associate secretary for Canada Ministries. "That's phenomenal. And West Toronto has picked up on that."

An integral part of the presbytery's make-up, multiculturalism has often had a negative effect on numbers, while also offering the best opportunity for growth. It is one of the largest presbyteries in the church (with 24 congregations, all single-charge), although six charges are vacant. Changing demographics have often decreased the number of Presbyterians in the area as new ethnicities and faith backgrounds move in and traditional Scots move out. "Some congregations have

been struggling as the demographics change," said Rev. Joe Williams, presbytery clerk, "but that keeps it interesting."

In many cases, new cultures simply picked up where others left off. First Hungarian was created in 1929 and later catered to the needs of some of the 20,000 Hungarian refugees fleeing from the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and settling in Ontario. Along with the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church in Toronto, First played host to mass refugee weddings, as many who came to Canada were unwed. Numbers aren't what they once were, now that second and third generations are moving onto other churches (or no church at all). However, more than 100 people still attend Sunday worship there — no small feat considering most of the parishioners travel from well outside the city.

Zoltan Vass is the minister at First and current moderator of presbytery. He said the presbytery tries its best to respond to ethnic congregations, but there is still room for improvement. "It's not the welcoming that is the problem," he said, "but

dealing with and understanding ethnic congregations." He said members from these churches should have larger leadership roles in the presbytery and involved more heavily in decision-making. "Ethnic congregations have special needs and have a special way of thinking. They come from different cultures and sharing this would be a good idea."

Haynes said welcoming ethnic congregations into the fold will be vital to the future success of the church. "The presbytery has had to close some churches in the past," he said, "but they're also willing to take on ethnic ministries. In many ways, at least for urban congregations, this will be the way to go."

North Park church is a Spanish-speaking congregation that began as an outreach program within an English-speaking church. Elias Morales, minister at North Park, headed up a refugee and Spanish ministry until the English group got smaller and the Spanish contingent grew. The church is growing with many new members from Central and South America. Williams, who has been in the



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### ANSWERS FOR CALLED TO WONDER FROM PAGE 49:

TO THE ROCK OF OUR SALVATION (!)  
Psalm 95:1b

TO GOD WITH SONGS OF PRAISE!  
Psalm 95:2b

BEFORE THE LORD (!) OUR MAKER (!)  
Psalm 95:6b

PASTURE (!) AND THE SHEEP OF GOD'S HAND (!)  
Psalm 95:7b

presbytery for 25 years, said the congregation is improving all the time and is developing into a vibrant ministry.

The congregation at North Park writes a weekly page for a Spanish newspaper as an outreach to the community and in 2002 they developed several Christmas stories that were broadcast on a Spanish radio program. The youth group participates in services and developed a puppet ministry as an outreach to families in the neighbourhood. Their refugee ministry is still going strong, with Morales working with Justice Ministries and Presbyterian World Service & Development for support. "He's very dedicated," said Haynes. "You have to be to do the work he does."

Toronto's Portuguese-speaking congregation also began as a mission outreach. Continuing in this vein for two or three years, Lincoln Resende took up the post as minister and began drawing in people from the neighbourhood. They now have their own building and continue to grow with about 90 people attending on a Sunday morning.

The cultural diversity makes for rich music ministry. Parishioners from Brazil, Portugal, the Azores Islands and Angola participate. Guitars, violins, saxophones and Angolan drums are used during worship, and there are youth, child and Angolan choirs. They also help sponsor refugees.

The Ghanaian church has been growing since its inception nearly 11 years ago. With attendance well over 300 people, the congregation decided it was time to move to a bigger building. Construction began in Oct. 2004 and is expected to open this fall. "It is easily one of the largest churches in the PCC," said Haynes, "or it will become one of the largest if it isn't already." It began as a mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, which still provides the church with ministers. The congregation was instrumental in establishing the Ghanaian church in Montreal.

Morningside-High Park, established in 1968 when two congregations amalgamated, is involved in countless projects and outreach ministries. Their website states that they "Strive to make worship services biblically sound, spiritually uplifting, culturally relevant, intellectually stimulating, appropriately inclusive and

meaningful for all ages."

St. Giles', Kingsway, is a healthy congregation with about 250 attending church on Sunday. They have a senior and associate minister, two morning services and one on Sunday evening, provide sermons in audio format on their comprehensive website and are involved in numerous outreach projects. The fellowship committee gives individuals a ride to church who need it, the friendship club meets with developmentally disabled adults three times a month for fellowship, summer worship services take place in the courtyard, bringing in guest preachers and attracting passers-by, and they support Evangel Hall, Christian Blind Mission, Medical Mission of Canada and Compassion Canada, to name just a few.

Victoria-Royce church began in 1885 in the waiting room of the Toronto junction railway station of the Canadian Pacific Railway. About 50 people gathered there regularly. The first church building was known as West Toronto Junction Presbyterian Church but they changed their name in 1897 to honour Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. Today the congregation's numbers reflect the original crowd, although it did at one point welcome about 250 members through its doors. The church lost about half of its members during Union in 1925 and it amalgamated with Royce church in 1969.

They now offer a homework club, mom and baby café, games and movie nights, first aid and CPR workshops, special concerts and an open stage night where people from the community are invited to perform music, poetry and dance. The neighbourhood around them has changed greatly since the days of the train station meetings, with various cultures and languages represented. Currently without a minister, the church website states that the congregation is "struggling to maintain the heritage of its ancestors in a greatly changed West Toronto."

Despite some difficulties resulting from changing demographics and traditional congregations being unsure what to do next, there is hope for the future. "The Presbyterian church doesn't have to be as it was in the past," said Haynes. "It can change." ☺

ples than those conservative and literalist that lead him to his conclusions about what God wants. Beyond that which Scripture says (and does not say) about the matter, I have been privileged, in over 40 years of ministry, to work with many congregants, counselees, students and colleagues who are gay/lesbian/transgendered — and to learn from them how God is present in their lives.

We need to listen, more carefully than Mr. Benty apparently would have us do, to each other and to the Scriptures, as we address aspects of human sexuality, which he would summarily dismiss as sin. Name-calling and judgment of colleagues in ministry is certainly not a way to honour the church's Lord or to be Presbyterian.

*John C. Carr, Ph.D., Ch.Psych.  
Edmonton*

## Corrections

*Re. Albion Gardens Church Muffin Madness event, People And Places.*

One of the names for the caption was incorrect. The first name, Helen McCue should be Helen Kidd.

*Don Mincoff  
via email*

*Re. Contest in the Presbytery of London, September.*

There was no contest held. The Presbytery invited applications and candidates were interviewed. All candidates were of the highest caliber and it was a most difficult decision to make, however Bryan Thiel was selected as the presbytery's Young Adult Representative — and a fine representative he was!

*Rev. Kathy Fraser  
Moderator, Presbytery of London*

The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.  
[letters@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:letters@presbyterianrecord.ca)

# obituaries

**BADDER, Russell**, aged 90 and long time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

**BUTLER, Marilyn**, aged 70 and long time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont. She was a choir member and involved in the Saturday morning Breakfast Program.

**DUNCAN, Rev. Dr. Graeme**, on Sunday, July 3, 2005 at Exeter Villa, Exeter, Ont. In his 68th year. Dear husband of the Rev. Lillian Wilton. Lovingly remembered by children Stephen (Maria), Richard (Emma), Marjorie Copeland (Craig), Mary Louise, sister Margaret Duncan, brother-in-law Don Ayre and grandchildren Andrew, Natalie, Rachel, Heather and Elizabeth. Predeceased by his first wife and the children's mother Suzanne (Fitzgibbon) Duncan (1989), by parents William and Christena (Elliot), and sisters Jean and Wilma (Ayre). Graeme graduated from Presbyterian College, Montreal in 1962 and served the Presbyterian Church in Canada as minister of North Park, Regina, Sask., Knox, Carberry, Man. and St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont. He also served the church on a number of boards and committees both nationally, at the synod level and in presbytery. He will be remembered most for his sense of humour and his gift of storytelling with which he made the gospel of Jesus Christ both relevant and personal. Blessed are those who die in the Lord. They may rest from their labours for their deeds follow them. (Rev. 14:13)

**FORD, Rev. Frank A.**, (Anglican) aged 75. Passed away peacefully after a brave battle with cancer on May 11, 2005 with his loving wife Shirley at his side. Frank was a great friend to the camping world and especially to the PCC camps and outdoor ministry programs. Frank is sadly missed by his loving wife Shirley and by his many friends. (Shirley Ford was the Program Director for Camping and Outdoor Ministries in the PCC for the five years of contract, 1986 to 1991).

**JOHNSTON, Enid**, aged 93 and long time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

**MCCARTHY, Isabelle**, long time member of Leaside Presbyterian Church, Toronto, and former member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, Ont.; February 5, 2005.

**READ, Athalie Helen Margaret**, aged 89 died on August 26, 2005. Athalie was a Member of the Order of Diaconal Ministries, designated in 1943. She faithfully served the church as a deaconess for 38 years, both in Canada and overseas in Guyana (1961-1970). Athalie retired to Brockville, Ont., in 1981. Throughout her life, Athalie knew the keeping care of a loving God. It was her deep and abiding faith in her saviour that led her all the way. Athalie's quiet confidence and commitment to the work of her Lord was a testimony that will be well remembered by all who were blessed in knowing her.

**REID, Richard**, aged 73 and long time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

Rate for obituary notices: \$1 per word or \$55 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.

Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: [obituaries@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:obituaries@presbyterianrecord.ca)

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# Defending Sunday service

*Worship may feed faith, or break it open to reveal its true hunger*

BY ANDREW FAIZ

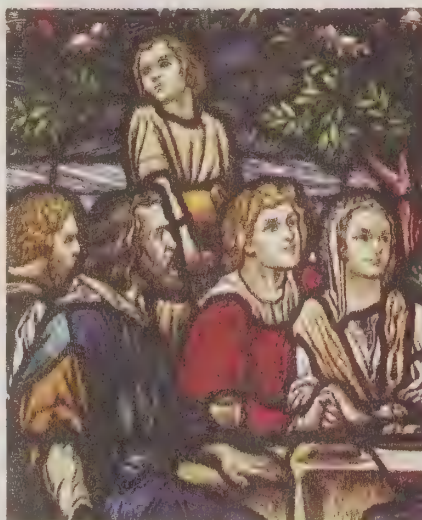
*I received letters in response to my July/August column. Some were offended I would suggest Sunday morning service is often a waste of time. Others agreed. I present one of these letters in place of my column this month. It is by Rev. Laurence DeWolfe, of Saint David's, Halifax. He also teaches preaching at the Atlantic School of Theology.*

Andrew Faiz writes, "We stay [in our churches] because our fellows in the pews become our family... The sermon [is] the price we have to pay for coffee hour." Let's suppose he's right. Faiz's perceptions echo what I've heard from people of all ages, especially those younger than me. I'm old enough to have heard at least 500 more sermons than he has.

What leads Faiz and others to dismiss preaching and write off worship? Sometimes we who lead worship don't prepare well. We justify poor leadership, saying, "Well, as long as it's sincere..." Sometimes we act as if prayers and readings are just add-ons to preaching. Or begrudged additions to praise music.

Boring sermons are all too common. They are sure signs the preacher thinks too little, or too much, of her or his abilities. Or he or she has decided preaching isn't that important, after all. It seems some preachers have just given up trying to be their best.

Faiz is kind enough to say, "I know that most ministers... take Sunday service very seriously." But he says he finds most preaching condescending and paternalistic. Surely that has more to do with his reluctance to accept being preached to, than it does with the quality of any sermon or the skill of any preacher. But let's suppose he's right, and



preaching often dents personal faith and usually fails to enhance spirituality.

I always choke when I hear the word spirituality. We devoted a whole year to it in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. My conclusion at the end of the year was that I was supposed to "make diligent use of the means of grace," as I had promised to do when I joined the church at age 15. But Faiz seems to mean something other than prayer, public worship, Bible reading, preaching and the sacraments.

Spirituality means whatever the speaker wants. To some, it's synonymous with Christian faith. To others, it's the antonym of religion or church. Spirituality covers anything to do with our sense or experience of God, self or community. I can't make it more specific than that. Maybe the reason worship and preaching tend not to enhance spirituality is that they're so darned *specific*.

Good preaching may begin with the general, but it always gets specific somewhere along the way. It grows out of a pastoral awareness of what's important for a congregation in its specific situation.

Whether or not a congregation, or any member, wants to hear it is another matter.

Worship may feed faith, or break it open to reveal its true hunger. Depends on the worshiper's specificity. We can always find new and appropriate ways to offer praise and share God's love. Faiz is right to call attention to the reluctance of most congregations to accept any change in worship. New forms or old, the praise we offer and love we speak and celebrate are still specifically Christian. Specifically Christian notes don't always resonate with our personal spiritualities. The word both saves and judges, comforts and afflicts. The post-modern heart may be fully computerized, but it's still a factory of idols.

Maybe worship *is* a dysfunctional gathering of the clan. After all it *is* a clan that gathers. I've yet to meet a fully functional family. By God's grace the gathered congregation, and what it does when it gathers, make far more than the sum of its dented and broken parts. God doesn't demand perfection. God deserves quality, but doesn't always get it.

I know Faiz writes to provoke response. More power to him. Sometimes we need a good poke to get us to consider the views of people much more in tune with pop culture than are most Presbyterians. I hope he'll take another look into those two things that have so much to do with the church being church in every age: the worship of the gathered people of God and the preaching of the word. *✠*

Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the *Record*. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca). This column and all other editorial material in the magazine are available at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).

# Homeland security

*God has prepared a heavenly paradise for us all*

BY DAVID WEBBER

**H**orn Lake is my favorite place in the entire world. It is three hours to the west from the nearest village of Williams Lake. It forms the headwater of the west branch of the Homathko River or Mosley Creek on the very western edge of the dry interior Chilcotin Plateau. It is 80 kilometres from the Pacific Ocean where the Homathko empties into the deep fiord of Butte Inlet whose entrance is just north of Desolation Sound and guarded by Quadra and Cortez Islands. Once thought to be the best option for a rail-linked seaport with the rest of Canada, the Chilcotin-Homathko-Butte Inlet alternative lost out to the much longer and more difficult route through the Fraser Canyon and the much lesser natural harbour of Vancouver in Canada's most famous political scandal called the C.P.R. The results were that the rough gravel road now ends just beyond Horn Lake and access to Butte Inlet is still by water or ancient Indian trail.

Almost every year for the past 16 years of our lives in the Cariboo-Chilcotin we have managed to spend at least a couple of weeks beached at Horn Lake. This past summer was no exception. When we arrived at the rough campsite we couldn't get the boat off of the top of the pickup fast enough. We couldn't wait to idle out to Horn Lake's centre and soak in the panoramic view. Two most impressive peaks, Whitesaddle and Razorback, seem to thrust themselves right out of the lake to an elevation of 3,000 metres. One of British Columbia's highest peaks, Mt. Waddington, towers just around the corner to an elevation of 4,016 metres. Just to the southwest is the Homathko Ice-field, so huge that it generates its own weather patterns.



If the mountain beauty is not enough to capture us, the abundant wildlife certainly is. Mule deer and moose frequently wander down to take a cool drink from the waters of Horn Lake. Both black and grizzly bears frequent its shores. Cougars and lynx slink around and mountain goats peer down from on

high. Townsend chipmunks and red squirrels are always waiting to entertain us with their antics and scolding. This year our focus was on the bird life. There was a constant seesaw going on between a golden eye female duck with a brood of five tiny chocolate-headed replicas and all the avian predators that





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try to make a living around the lake. I am not sure how many times we saw seagull or raven or big horned owl swoop down on the lake to take lunch at the golden eye restaurant and it still amazes me how efficient golden eye was as a mother. That all five of her brood survived our time at the lake was nothing short of miraculous. A bald eagle kept us entertained nervously caring for her recently fledged brood and then pulled out all the stops one evening as she attempted to feed her brood right off the fishing line of an irate Yankee. The poor guy was yelling and waving his hat with one hand as he was trying to land his rather large trout with the other. If ever a guy badly needed another set of arms, he was it.

One day last summer I took the boat out by myself and motored to the north end of the lake to where we almost bought a piece of property at a provincial auction a few years back. We were not successful and I have regretted that ever since. I stopped the boat in the bay where the property was, stared at the mountains and the lake, wept and pondered what might have been.

The isolation, the massive mountains, the clear mountain lake, the crystal cold creeks and the abundant fur, fin and feathered friends make myself, Linda and all of our children feel like we have come home when we arrive at Horn Lake. All year long when we are away from it we feel a total body, mind and soul pull towards the place. But as wonderful as it is, as much of a favorite place that it is, with all the ways that it nurtures us, with all the constant pull that it has on us, Horn Lake must be nothing compared to the home that Christ has prepared for us.

I don't know how often I have heard Jesus' words, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you," but every time I do I feel the most compelling, mind alluring, heart rendering, spirit thirsting, magnetic pull. It places a tug on my whole being that far outstrips the pull of Horn Lake. As I feel that pull, the Master's allure, I think of the perfection and majesty of Horn Lake and I think to myself, "Dave you ain't seen nothing yet!" And when Jesus continues, "I go to prepare a

place for you..." I can see in my mind's eye that place with Him, all laid out in preparation, just waiting for me, biblical mountains, scriptural crystal waters, Word of God trees of life. It is a place of peace, of hope, of divine forgiving love. And by faith as I see it in my mind's eye I am persuaded with the Apostle: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." And with hope I hear the Apostle, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us." And touched, by the forgiving love of the Master's nail-scarred hands, His words reverberate deep within me: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." And somehow all of this is drawing me towards my real homeland, making me feel extremely secure as I go about my living and eventually my dying.

A long-time and very precious minister friend, very old and near his time of passing, once confessed to me that he did not believe in heaven any longer. After much thought, a lifetime of it you might say, he had arrived at the theological conclusion that we lived and we died and we awaited resurrection. I suppose that this is one way of theologically looking at things. But I confess I am not very theological, I tend to be much more simple in my thinking and literal in my looking through the lens of Scripture. I will throw in with the likes of Abraham and Sarah who the writer of the book of Hebrews says "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." ☺

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

# vacancies

• To report a vacancy for the next issue of the Record please contact: **Deborah Leader**  
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 • All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: \$10 for the basic notice and \$1 per word for additional information. (There is no charge for congregations on the Every Home or Club 50 plans.)

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 Tatamagouche Pastoral Charge: Sedgwick Memorial, Tatamagouche, St. Matthew's, Wallace and St. John's, Pugwash; Interim-moderator Richard E. Sand, 37 Mountain Rd., New Glasgow, NS B2H 3K7; [acersand@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:acersand@ns.sympatico.ca).  
 Thornburn and Sutherland's River, NS; Union; Interim Moderator Rev. E. M. Iona MacLean, PO Box 1003, Pictou, NS B0K 1H0; [ionamac@eastlink.ca](mailto:ionamac@eastlink.ca).  
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Howick, Georgetown; 1/2 time; Rev. Dr. Barry Mack, 496 Birch Ave., Saint-Lambert, QC J4P 2M8; 450-671-1862; [standrews@standrews-stlambert.ca](mailto:standrews@standrews-stlambert.ca).  
 Inverness, co-operative with the United Church, 3-point charge; a 3/4 time position and knowledge of French would be an asset; Rev. J. B. Forsyth, 585 Principale sud, Waterville, QC J0B 3H0; 819-837-1475; [jbfor@netrevolution.com](mailto:jbfor@netrevolution.com).  
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 North Bay, Calvin; Rev. Wallace Little, PO Box 983, Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0; 705-384-5453; [awlittle@sympatico.ca](mailto:awlittle@sympatico.ca). (effective July 31, 2005)

Palmerston, Knox; Drayton, Knox; Rev. Dr. Brice L. Martin, 190 Tucker St., PO Box 159, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0; [bricelmartin@yahoo.com](mailto:bricelmartin@yahoo.com).  
 Stayner, Jubilee; Sunnidale Corners, Zion; Rev. Keith Boyer; 27 Laurie Cres., Barrie, ON L4M 6C7; 705-735-9211; [keb-cvb@sympatico.ca](mailto:keb-cvb@sympatico.ca).  
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 Toronto, Patterson; Rev. Zoltan Vass, 439 Vaughan Rd., Toronto, ON M6C 2P1; 416-656-1342  
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 Uxbridge, St. Andrew's-Chalmers; Rev. Duncan Cameron; 115 St. Andrews Rd., Scarborough, ON M1P 4N2; 416-438-4370; [scarboroughpc@allstream.net](mailto:scarboroughpc@allstream.net).  
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### Synod of Southwestern Ontario

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# called to wonder



Created by Jennifer O'Farrell,  
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## ● ● ● ● CIRCLES OF PRAISE ● ● ● ●

Start at the arrow and write the letter it points to into the first blank, found below the circle. Then going clockwise, skip one letter (or symbol) on the circle and write down that next letter or symbol into the next blank. Skip over the next one again and write it down, and so on. Repeat for each circle and you soon will be reading verses from Psalm 95.



O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD;  
LET US MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ !



LET US COME INTO GOD'S PRESENCE WITH THANKSGIVING;  
LET US MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .



O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND BOW DOWN,  
LET US KNEEL

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ !



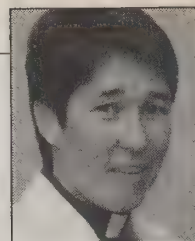
FOR GOD IS OURS,  
AND WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD'S

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

Answers on page 43.

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# Pledging to the Prince of Peace

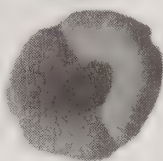
*From remembrance to an act of faith*

I never really understood the power of Remembrance Day until I led a service in a long-term care centre on November 11. Paying attention to Remembrance Day has been part of my life since I was a child either by attending services at school, or at the local cenotaph. Church services that I have attended, or led, early in November, always had at least a portion dedicated to remembering the lives of those who died in war, and also included prayers for peace. Those services have been memorable and important for me, but not transforming. Perhaps it was because there was always a distance, a chasm, that separated me in time and experience from the pain and suffering of war. When called to remember, I was casting back over decades in an act of respect.

At the nursing home, November 11 is bigger than Christmas and Easter. Residents, from all faith traditions, make the effort to gather together to worship God and to remember the losses and horror of war. There, the collective memory and wisdom of elders teaches the immediacy and heart gripping reality of why we must remember. Their tributes, their tears, their dignified presence, their silence so filled with the moment at hand, as they remember what they saw and heard and felt in the midst of war, transforms my act of respect into an act of faith. There is no distance, no chasm of time or geography in this sacred time as the evil of war and the price of peace is proclaimed in faith. This honour guard processes in a courageous parade with the flags balanced gently in walkers and wheelchairs. The bearers bear more than the flags as this solemn assembly

knows better than most why we would gather in the presence of God to pray for peace. Theirs is an act of faith, and I am changed by their witness of the power of God to hold and heal nations, and our responsibility to respond in peaceful ways — everyday.

This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the end of WWII. As Canadian Presbyterians, we remember the sacrifice of so many in the wars of the last



**The reality of war is still stealing lives and bringing destruction and devastation in many areas of the world today**

century and we pledge ourselves to peace in the name of the Prince of Peace. In Canada, 2005 has been named The Year of the Veteran. We thank God for the many men and women in our church, and those beyond our church, who served their country. We pray that their lives will change ours, as together we bear witness to the vision and gift of peace.

The reality of war is still stealing lives and bringing destruction and devastation in many areas of the world today. The Presbyterian Church in Canada, in an act of faith, participates ecumenically with partner churches and other agencies in efforts to encourage peace and secure peace. We are also present with the women and men of the Canadian Forces through our military chaplains. There are eight Presbyterian chaplains who serve as agents of the gospel of Jesus Christ within the military community. These ministers of our church have been called to a very unique and specialized ministry as they bring the presence of Christ to members of the Canadian Forces and their

families. There are also an equal number of reserve chaplains serving Reserve Units across Canada. Military chaplains need our support and prayers as they minister to their own, facilitate the worship of others and care for all. It will be my privilege to meet with the Presbyterian chaplains as they gather in Trenton, Ont., on November 22-23.

*In Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief* the section on Peace is placed within the chapter, Our Life in Christ. Moving from an act of respect to an act of faith comes in a moment of grace when we recognize and respond to Christ's call to live in him.

It usually happens in community when we see ourselves in vulnerable solidarity with others — in Christ.

In this issue of the *Record*, there are opportunities for us to move from acts of respect to acts of faith as we support the ministries and agencies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the name of Jesus Christ.

May the peace of Christ live in us and through us.

*Jean Morris*



"To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow."  
Horace Reid, Jack Stagg and Murray  
Mackay of St. Giles', North Sydney, N.S.,  
remember.

## MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

### November

- 1 Ecumenical Service, Calgary
- 4-5 Church Doctrine Committee,  
Toronto
- 5 Record Board, Toronto
- 6 St. Paul's, Oshawa, Ont.
- 7-9 Life and Mission Agency, Crieff  
Hills, Ont.
- 7 Evergreen Ministry, Toronto
- 20-22 Assembly Council, Crieff Hills,  
Ont.
- 22-23 Canadian Forces Chaplains,  
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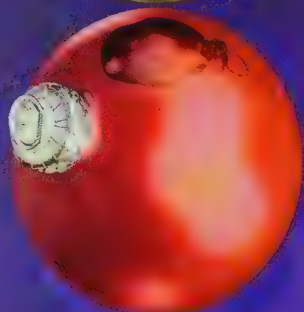
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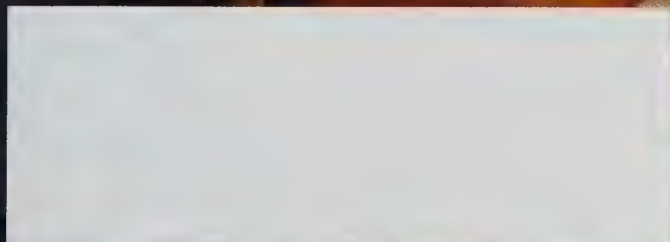


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## VISITING NEPAL

A missionary's letter



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## The supreme season of stories

Such is the power of myth, of story, that nearly 40 years on I can still recall that feeling of entering the wardrobe for the first time – the one that leads to the enchanting land of Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Opening the book itself was like stepping into that other world of magic and talking animals. • I knew nothing of C.S. Lewis then, but I still have the Puffin paperback set – the \$5.95 sticker is

still on the box—that was first printed the year I was born, a mere three years after Lewis completed the series.

This year, on Dec. 9, backed by churchgoing U.S. Presbyterian billionaire Philip Anschutz, Disney's version of Narnia will open on the big screen. It will be wrong to compare the movie with the book, though I shall certainly be near the front of the line; the two are totally different media. This is especially so with a writer like Lewis who put enormous stock in myth, in the power of the word.

Lewis wrote about myth in both academic articles and books as well as in his stories. He called it the “romantic longing” in humanity. His collection of wartime radio broadcasts, assembled into the book *Mere Christianity*, is an entirely different Lewis from Narnia and anything remotely romantic. There he is straightforward and dry, a very model of British common sense philosophy, a “man-to-man” kind of approach: He hadn't yet met Joy.

Helen Joy Davidman Gresham was to turn his world, if not upside down, then certainly on its side. I don't know if he put it quite this way, but I think Joy incarnated love for Lewis. (And although there are Lewis scholars who will disagree and it certainly can't be proved, I suspect that had she lived longer, she would have knocked Lewis's ideas about the role of men and women, as defined in *Mere Christianity*, on their head.)

The interesting thing about his marriage is that it clearly provided a vehicle for expressing truths in the same way that stories do—and in so very different a fashion than something like *Mere Christianity*.

In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis writes this about the gospel stories:

If ever a myth had become a fact, had been incarnated, it would be just like this. And nothing else in all literature was just like this. Myths were like it in one way. Histories were like it in another. But nothing was

simply like it... Here and here only in all time the myth must have become fact; the Word, flesh; God, man. This is not “a religion,” nor “a philosophy.” It is the summing up and actuality of them all.

Compare that to what he writes in the fifth book of Narnia, *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader”* where the narrator says of Lucy, “a good story is a story which reminds her of the forgotten story in the Magician's Book,” a story “about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill.”

Lewis was not alone in his interest in the power of stories to relate truths. Among his friends were the writers Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, and J.R.R. Tolkien, (members of the literary group, the Inklings), as well as G.K. Chesterton, George MacDonald and Dorothy Sayers.

Unsurprisingly, J.K. Rowling, whose Harry Potter movie *Goblet of Fire* will have opened by the time this is published, has acknowledged her admiration for the Inklings. Between Hogwarts, hobbits and, now, the characters of Narnia, a good deal of Christian-influenced myth is now in circulation in popular culture.

It would be interesting to get Lewis's take on this because he was both an astute observer of society and far more generous than many today on what Christianity means. But this is supremely the season of stories, and about one particular story. Charles Schulz knew that, just as Luke the gospeller did, which is why Linus's lines in the Christmas pageant are: “And there were in the same country shepherds... ”

May this Story become incarnate for you and your family and friends this Christmas, and may you, like C.S. Lewis, be surprised by joy.

David Harris





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December 2005

## SPECIAL FEATURE

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Celebrating the mere Christianity of C.S. Lewis



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On the cover: Illustration by Helen Breznik



# letters

## International missionaries

I read with great pleasure the article about Azucena Antunez in October. It is good to know that Canadians will get to know her and the work of Soynica.

PWS&D's support is important and much appreciated, but its contact with Soynica followed that of International Ministries.

International Ministries is present in the important work of Soynica in the presence of our missionary, Denise Van Wissen, whose passion for the people of Nicaragua and for the work of Soynica should be underlined as well.

While PWS&D's presence remains vital and singularly positive. International Ministries' Denise and David Vilalonga make our church lively and present amongst the Nicaraguans.

Joe Reed  
Managua, Nicaragua

## The log in the eye

Re. Editorial, October

David Harris reminds us of Jesus' teaching about the speck in the eye vs. the log in the eye. Our Lord, I think, was referring to personal attacks on acquaintances, friends and enemies. However, I don't believe he meant that Herod, Caesar, the Pharisees, the Sadducees or the scribes were exempt from criticism. Most of us cannot hear that message too often. It could be the theme of daily confession. If this is the case, it shuts off all debate. Christians can then never lift their voices in a negative way against the principalities and

powers. And according to this strict interpretation, I am wrong to raise any questions about the editor's judgement.

Philip J. Lee  
Saint John, N.B.

## Happy accidents

I read with interest Old Tosh and Balderdash by Andrew Faiz in October. While I agree with the content and argument presented, I believe he does a disservice to the authors of the books noted in the article. He implies *The Eight* by Katherine Neville, and *The Rule of Four* by Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason, were written in response to *The Da Vinci Code*. In fact, Ms. Neville's book was written in 1988, preceding the publication of Dan Brown's blockbuster by 15 years! *The Rule of Four* was published nearly a year after *Da Vinci*, but I would be very surprised if they had not written the greater part of their book before the 2003 publication date of *The Da Vinci Code*. I agree both are wonderful reads, but let's get our facts straight! They do not "try to distance themselves from *Da Vinci*." although perhaps sales of both books have increased as a result of the popularity of *Da Vinci*. A happy accident indeed, but definitely an accident. And that is my final contribution to keeping the story alive.

Lois Rooney-Giurin  
Chatham, Ont.

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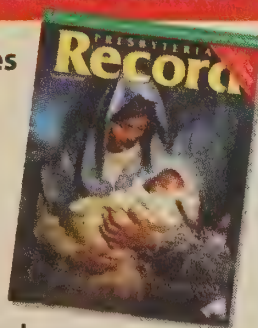
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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

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*Faiz replies:* It is rare for 15-year-old out-of-print books to make a comeback. Both books make the *Da Vinci* link on their paperback covers, or in the blurbs inside. Turn to the back, however, and both books declare their independence from Brown's phenomenon. While the authors are eager to distance themselves from Brown, the publishers are thrilled with the happy accident.

## Guilty for loving his daughter

*Re. Same Sex Marriage Minister Punished, October*

It is ludicrous that this type of thing happens to a minister! A man of the cloth was presiding over a marriage of his daughter, who loved a lady enough to marry her, and the father has been found guilty and punished. What kind of society do we live in?

I am a 64-year-old man, who is married to a woman, whom I love very much. Just for the record, I am the same person who wrote once before about cruel comics by Pontius' Puddle. I want no more to do with Christians that abuse other Christians, and especially abuse ministers. I am ashamed of being a Christian by the article.

*Robert Money  
Scarborough, Ont.*

## Living language

*Re. Pop Grammar, Letters, October*

Using *I* in the phrase "with you and I" is one of the most common mistakes heard or written today, even by CBC interviewers. *I* should only be used in the subjective form, as subject of a verb. The phrase should be read as "with you and me" where *me* is the object of the preposition, *with*. The objective form of pronouns can follow prepositions as well as verbs. For example, "They gave the books to you and me," and "she saw me/him/us/them at the store."

"You and I" could be correct if it was the subject of a sentence, e.g.: Remember? You and I were here a year ago.

The worst of today's usages is "me" used as a subject of a sentence. e.g.: Me and my friend were there last night.

Another common error is confusing fewer and less. Fewer goes with countable nouns, e.g. "fewer suitcases" but "less luggage."


As the old adage states, language is alive and must keep changing.

*Mary Lou Johnston  
Dunnville, Ont.*

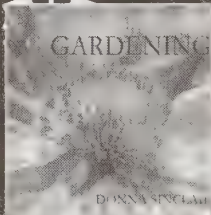
## God's loving purpose

As a happily married heterosexual woman without children, I am offended by the argument that marriage without children is not really marriage. Michael Coren (October) uses this argument to oppose same sex marriage. He writes,


## A Winter of Content



Tom Harpur



Donna Sinclair



Gailand MacQueen

Northstone

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"Sex between people of the same gender can by its very nature never result in new life and is in the final analysis a selfish act. . . and never a means to that most glorious of ends, God-given life."

Sex between people of the opposite gender may not result in new life either, whether because of age, infertility or other reasons. It is hurtful to suggest that such activity in a loving marriage relationship is "selfish." I like *Living Faith's* approach better: "We have been made male and female for our mutual help, comfort and joy. Our creation as sexual beings is God's loving purpose for us." It doesn't say anything about the necessity of having children in order to fulfill that purpose. While children are undoubtedly a wonderful gift of God and, of course, provide a future for humankind, please let's not make childless couples second-class citizens.

Iona MacLean  
Pictou N.S.

## From the People and Places editor:

In the year since I last wrote, the quality of submissions—the technical quality, the sense of humour, depiction of action and a concerted effort to capture the essence of your church and its mission—has greatly improved. For that I thank you—People and Places is a wholly reader-generated section of the magazine. We are entirely dependent on your good graces; and consider it an honour to serve you.

Each person who has been an elder for a year, a decade, a half-century, has served the church in Herculean fashion.

Each submission is the story of an individual, a local church, our church in our nation and our church in the world. People and Places is a window into our missions—it is the one place where we celebrate our true leaders: those who work day in, day out, over years and decades, without pay, as an expression of their faith.

To celebrate these heroes we decided this year to have each item larger in size and always in colour and with a more expansive, story-telling caption. Small, often blurry images (my last appeal to you, dear reader) do disservice to the honoured.

To keep pace with the rate of submissions—we get about one a day—we have been using our website to publish extra items.

How do we choose, you ask, which items go into the magazine, and which onto the website? Well, by lottery, really—mostly arbitrarily. Egregious cuteness—the baby reading the *Record*!! Who can resist?—will often win-out. As will a particularly serious message.

We don't judge our submissions—they are all heroic stories—but the practicalities of publishing force issues. And, the website has allowed us to tell more of the story than the magazine possibly could. We have picked up articles that appeared in local newspapers (see, Rev. Dr. R. Douglas MacDonald, November, for example) and put them on the website—something we could never do (space issues) in the print version.

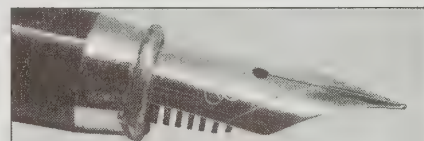
As of the end of October, by when the publication you now hold in your hands heads off to the printers, there

were over three dozen People and Places submissions that had yet to make their way into these pages. You will notice in this issue items dating from April and May. People and Places, like Art, Love, Hope and Grace, exceeds the grasp.

But, we shall catch up on this excess in this issue. If you made a submission prior to November 1, you will find it on the website (if not in these pages) for this issue. We shall attempt to keep pace with our submissions—choosing by lottery a few for the print version—and celebrating the rest on the website.

No solution is ideal, but hopefully you will not have to wait a year or so to see your heroes honoured. And, when you do see them, it will be in colour, in a large format and with an appropriate story.

Oh, and one correction: I was wrong in the October issue—quite a few submissions had been received for our Mocha Mission contest. My apologies to all those who were alarmed. The winner (winners?—I'm not giving anything away!) will be announced in March.

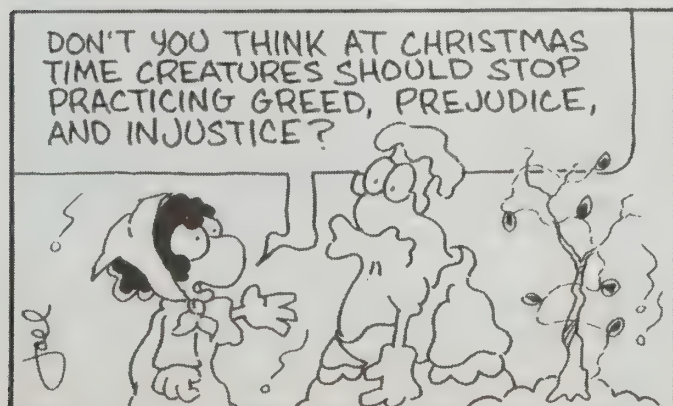


**The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.**

**[letters@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:letters@presbyterianrecord.ca)**



## Pontius' Puddle





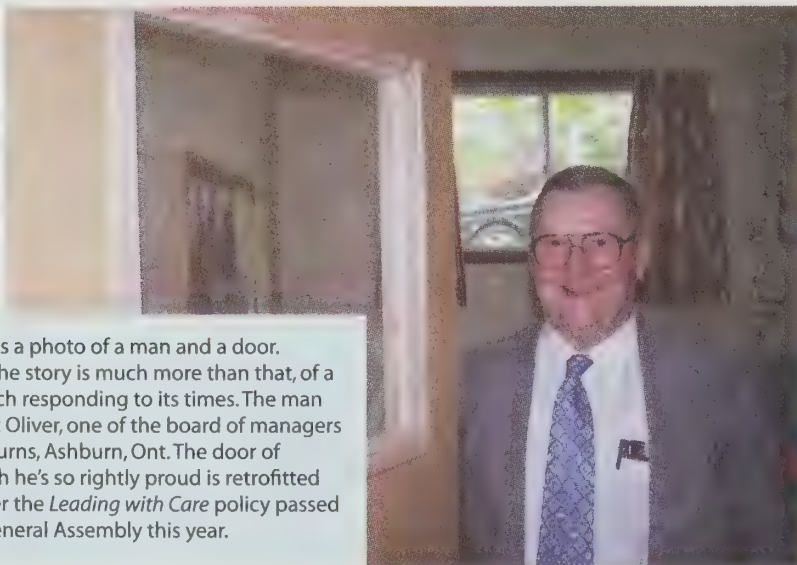
# people & places



Operation Christmas Child is a mission initiative of Samaritan's Purse, a Calgary-based non-denominational organization, which collects shoe boxes filled with gifts for impoverished children in developing nations. Last year 7.4 million boxes were collected. Here are a few of them from St. Giles', North Sydney, N.S. Sunday school teachers Georgina Keeping, Valerie Rogers, Stephanie McGean and Mark McGean are seen with Sunday School Superintendent Norma MacAdam.



The place: First, Pembroke, Ont.  
The occasion: An 80th anniversary, pot luck luncheon, in April.  
The rest of the story: Um, isn't it obvious? No? Well, Susan Timm created and modeled this dress she made out of *Record* covers as part of the anniversary celebrations. What you can't see in this photograph is that on the wall behind her is a poster declaring, "Go Forth. Jubilee!" And, that's what she's doing!



This is a photo of a man and a door.  
But the story is much more than that, of a church responding to its times. The man is Art Oliver, one of the board of managers for Burns, Ashburn, Ont. The door of which he's so rightly proud is retrofitted as per the *Leading with Care* policy passed at General Assembly this year.

**HAD CAKE LATELY?** Share your celebrations with the rest of the Church. Send your stories to [PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca) along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Group photographs reproduce poorly and can rarely be used. Photographs cannot be returned.



For more People & Places submissions  
please visit our website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)

Derek Congram, son of Rev. Chuck Congram of St. Andrew's, Lakeshore, is a forensic archaeologist. He has excavated mass graves in Iraq and Bosnia, helping to bring war criminals to justice. Visit the *Record's* website to read an article about Derek published by the *Windsor Star*.



PHOTO: NICK BRANCACCIO, WINDSOR STAR



A celebration luncheon marking the 70th anniversary to the Order of Deaconesses (diaconal ministries) for Margaret Williams (centre) was held June 29 at Parkwood, Ottawa. Standing with Margaret are from left, Ann Blane, Dorothy Herbert, Hye-Ok Lee, Susan Clarke, Lynda Reid, Dorothy Nekrassoff, Margaret Williams, Donna McIlveen, Christine Ball and Mary Campbell—members of the order who, along with some members from Parkwood Church, shared in this special anniversary celebration.

Four thousand dollars was raised for the new Evangel Hall building program through a free-will offering by 400 people attending a benefit concert in May. It was sponsored by the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus, who performed with featured guests The Bells of St. Andrew's, Scarborough, at Trinity, Toronto. The Toronto-based Ontario Presbyterian Chorus, along with singers from the Georgian Bay area, has travelled extensively in Northern Ireland and Eire, Scotland, the Maritime Provinces, Northern Ontario and most recently, Western Canada. The Bells of St. Andrew's, a handbell choir, have performed in churches, seniors' homes, at Roy Thomson Hall and the Markham Theatre. Featured ringers David and Heather Keith (seen here) have performed handbell duets across North America.





# Have a merry materialism month

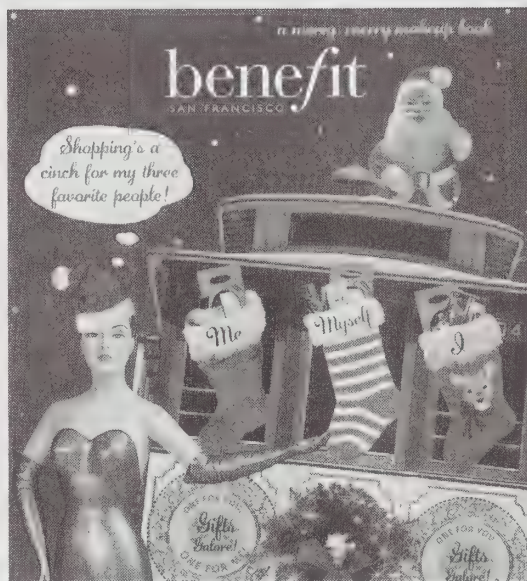
*Christmas is the most expensive, stressful and tiring season*

BY ANDREW FAIZ

I don't like the Christmas season. December is the most stressful month of the year, the good cheer is forced down our throats, suicide rates are at their highest, the music is tiresome and the money-bleed is shocking. The bathetic romance of family and friendship is in high gear, as if we must love and show our love more this month. It's a cheap collection of cheap emotions; and invariably some pompous columnist or sincere preacher or self-important relative will make the point that Christmas has become too materialistic.

Duh! Of course it's materialistic—materialism is society's primary religion. So primary, in fact, that the excessive spending in December is crucial to the economy. There are sectors of the economy wholly dependent on Christmas. For example, there is an annual tour of overpriced unnecessary kitsch, featuring clocks made from shel-lacked wood and chocolate covered cherries hand dipped by neo-hippies. These craft sales are held in convention centres and actually have cover charges, as if it were an entertainment, or a necessity.

Each one is crammed with people. Ordinary, hard-working middle-class folk, buying stocking stuffers, carefully choosing overwrought knitting designs they think their friends, relative, lovers and colleagues will accept as tokens of love and care. In return they will receive equally useless fare. This we call Christmas—eve or morning, the stuff of nostalgia, the warm glow of love. It begins with the madness of shopping for the perfect gift or, barring that, something nice or, barring that, something not too expensive that isn't ugly. But, we must



Christmas ad from The Bay.

get something, because it is Christmas and that is what it's all about. A significant portion of our annual budget is spent on this form of sharing our love.

At the end of the week, the month, the year, what most of us manage to accomplish most of all is work. We meet our deadlines; we collect our pay. And somehow what we do for that pay becomes who we are. Work defines us and the money we make sustains our self-definition. We are what we do and we are what we buy. And, to complete the equation, we are not whom we love or who loves us. So, each year, to end the year, we take the fruits of our labours (or more likely, the lines-of-credit those fruits have earned) and we make grand financial gestures of our love. We buy expensive unnecessary crap because we have to buy something.

I've tried over the past few years to stop gifting—Christmas, birthdays, etc.—in my family and the response has

been fascinating. At first the suggestion was taken personally, as if I had insulted the gifts I had received in the previous years. (No such intention.) Then there were negotiations—gifts within nuclear groupings but not necessarily to extended family. Of course, all the deals fell apart, as everybody bought gifts for everybody else. I felt the pressure to buy overwhelming; to not buy was somehow to say I was destitute or, worse, to say I wasn't capable of love towards my own family. The one agreement I found most amusing was to make certain the kids did not go without. As if denying them a materialistic Santa would pierce their innocence.

Of course, we could send a cheque to PWS&D. But gifting doesn't have to be altruistic. Nor does it have to be store bought. I, like you, spend a whole year gifting myself—DVDs, computer stuff, holidays, new clothes—I don't need anything. And I'm fully capable of getting stuff I want. But I never get tired of a perfect looking apple—just one. Or a cookie home baked; a muffin. Just one. Or, a bottle of wine. (More than one is fine.) I indulge and encourage the economy all year round. This month all I want to do is kick back, hang with those people I've ignored all year, have a drink, and think about that kid that was born in that barn so long ago. I want to do anything but have a merry materialism month. ☺

Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the *Record*. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca). This column and all other editorial material in the magazine are available at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).



Rain washed away many roads making access to remote areas very difficult. Here pedestrians are trying to cross a cliff face where there once was a road.



PHOTO: KENNETH KIM

## Guatemala damaged by Stan

*Delivering aid to remote communities*

BY KENNETH KIM

Nine straight days of rains from Hurricane Stan saturated the porous volcanic soils within Guatemala in early October. The result was heavy flooding in the coastal areas where much of the commercial agriculture is concentrated. Rivers overflowed their banks, flooding the flat plains. In some places it created new pathways washing away homes, crops and livestock. The heavy rains were equally unmerciful in the highland areas where many native Mayan people live. The rains brought torrential amounts of mud and debris down mountainsides. Small streams and rivers overflowed and threatened entire communities in their path. Though many communities were evacuated, some did not receive any warning, particularly in Solola and San Marcos. These areas have now been declared mass graves.

A few days after the worst of the rains ceased, I made a 230-kilometre journey that normally takes four hours from Guatemala City to Quetzaltenango. With the detours caused by mudslides and the convoys laden with relief supplies it took 10 hours to reach my destination. My truck was filled with donations from the Centre for Evangelical Pastoral Studies in Central America, where I am currently assigned. The following morning with the women of the *Fraternidad de Presbiteriales Mayas* (a PWS&D partner), we prepared and delivered bags of emergency food supplies to two communities cut off by the disaster. Neither community was reachable by vehicle. In both cases we had to hike to ask the women to come down to the road to pick up the supplies. The second community of Tojalik required a five-kilometre climb from the main highway.

We witnessed hundreds of men from the community working with nothing more than shovels and picks to rebuild and refill the road that

| *Continued on next page* >

## Joe Reed moves on from Central America

IN 1985, the Presbyterian Church had no partners in mission in Central America and no missionary presence. So the church sent Rev. Joe Reed to determine what might be done. Twenty years later, Reed is preparing to return to Canada, leaving behind three full-time missionaries in a more peaceful region where churches are involved in ministry in different contexts with new challenges, including poverty and economic development.

Reed's return from Central America was announced in a joint statement in October from Reed and Rev. Richard Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. The statement said a "mutual understanding" had been reached that the position of area liaison would be phased out as of Sept. 30.

"It was time for a review of where we were at," said Reed, in an interview. The initial purpose of the position was to "find ways in which our relatively small denomination in Canada could be helpful," he said. Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua were then embroiled in civil war and several presbyteries felt the church should do something to help.

Reed went to establish relationships in these and other Central American countries, and was successful in all but Honduras. As a result, the PCC became a founding member of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission, which helps coordinate and facilitate mission endeavours between the two regions.

The statement said that the current decision had been discussed for the last two years. Electronic communication, the relative ease and frequency of travel and the establishment of partnerships with many churches have changed ministry in Central America since Reed first began there. Talks about the department's future were initiated by the LMA.

| *Continued on page 13* >



Reed



< continued from previous page |

had disappeared. We counted at least five major breaks where the road had slid down the hill. Gaps of hundreds of metres and depths of 50 metres or more had to be bridged or filled in by the community. The men informed us that while the community suffered no deaths, a handful of houses were destroyed or damaged. However, what most worried them was the fact that their only road to and from the community was impassable. They had informed the nearest government office but were told that there were other priorities. Next year may be bleak if their crops end up rotting for not being able to get to the market and the community will be poorer without the income.

On the evening of Oct. 21, I was able to visit the Pacific coastal town of Champerico with CEIDEC (a PWS&D partner). We flew in a small Cessna because the main road had been cut when the overflowing rivers destroyed a major bridge. We landed on a soggy field to meet with leaders from 19 communities to assess their emergency needs. A once bustling tourist coastal town looked abandoned as only locals were evident in the street, and the restaurants and shops were void of life. The shrimping and fishing industries have been crippled by the destruction of habitat and then by the health department prohibiting the sale of seafood for fear of contamination. Three thousand families will need immediate food aid. CEIDEC is in the process of coordinating the purchase and delivery of 16 tonnes of emergency food supplies to the affected communities. — *Kenneth Kim works through International Ministries in Guatemala. He asks for prayers for the people devastated by Hurricane Stan.*

### Hurricane Stan damage (as of press time)

- 669 dead
- 844 not accounted for
- 9,096 houses destroyed
- 25,666 houses damaged
- 1,063 communities affected



## Knox, PC Montreal muse a merger

**K**nox College, Toronto, and The Presbyterian College, Montreal, have agreed to formally discuss the desirability of a merger between the two schools. A joint committee has been appointed to explore future directions for both institutions. An agreement would require the approval of the Committee on Theological Education and the General Assembly.

Dorcas Gordon, principal at Knox College, said the current discussions are motivated by the role the colleges can play as Canada and the Church change, and that it is the success of current co-operation between the schools that have initiated the possibility of further resource-sharing. "This is not coming out of a sense of imminent crisis," she said. "Student enrolment is up, our budgets are doing well, our endowments are growing. It's about aligning our resources better for progress and growth."

The idea of merging is not a new one. John Vissers, principal at PC Montreal, said the issue was brought up in the 1980s when the future of theological education was being discussed. "The colleges already cooperate nicely in a range of activities and programs," he said, "and with the relative health and strength of the colleges, it's time to talk again about the future." According to a

press release issued by both colleges, the current consultations flow "from a desire to serve the good of the whole church faithfully by engaging in creative discussions which will consider possibilities for a new vision of theological education in a changing Canadian context."

"The status quo is not good enough," said Vissers. "It is a new moment in the culture of the church and the colleges ought to be in the forefront of raising issues and questions. What does the church need in the 21st century and how do we reshape theological schools to address those realities?"

While considering the desirability of a merger, the committee will reflect upon the distinctive contributions of each school as well as their commonly held values. They will explore questions about mission, identity and philosophy, academic programs of study and curriculum, human resources, governance and finance and facilities.

Gordon called the discussions "an historical moment," as it is the first time both principals will be fully engaged in the process and the schools' boards unanimously agreed to begin deliberations.

A date to begin discussions has not yet been set, and no time limit has been given. — AM

# Churches seek meeting with Annan about global poverty

The heads of seven church groupings from around the world are seeking to meet United Nations' Secretary General Kofi Annan to discuss continued UN action to cut the rate of global poverty.

After a week of meetings in New York and Washington, DC, the ecumenical leaders also suggested in a September letter that the UN organize an international gathering to explore the possibility of forming a peace-keeping force in Iraq.

In the letter, the church leaders applauded Annan's leadership in trying to implement the UN's Millennium Development Goals, intended to prod the international community to greatly reduce the rate of extreme global poverty by 2015.

"We wish to encourage you to continue this vital work [supporting the Millennium goals] and we pledge ourselves to work with you to try and hold the countries of the world accountable to those goals which are so vitally important to so many of our people in so many places," the Christian leaders said in their letter to Annan.

On Iraq, the leaders said they continued to believe that



**H. Mvume Dandala**

an international force was "the most effective opportunity in that deeply difficult and complex situation."

Annan has made a commitment to deepening ties between the UN and the international religious community. The ecumenical leaders last met the general secretary in May 2004.

The signatories of the letter include Rev. H. Mvume Dandala, general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, Rev. Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches and Rev. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA. — *ENI*

## Churches aid earthquake victims in Pakistan

A 7.6 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE hit parts of the south Asian subcontinent on Oct. 8. The quake was centered in the mountains of Pakistani Kashmir, near the Indian border, about 95 kilometres northeast of Islamabad. As many as 79,000 people have died, with at least 65,000 injured. An estimated three million people are homeless, in what are now winter conditions. Presbyterian World Service & Development is supporting the work of Action by Churches Together, which is providing immediate relief to survivors.

ACT member Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS), responded immediately. The day after the disaster, CWS sent food, matches and soap to 1,600 families in the most affected areas. CWS's Basic Health Unit staff in Mansehra report they are already seeing an increasing flow of people with medical needs. Tetanus shots are being given to all people in this hard-hit area.

"The situation is still very chaotic here," said CWS senior program manager Shama Mall. "Everyone is focusing on rescue efforts, but those have been made difficult by the heavy rains and hail that hit some of the affected areas. Tremors are continuing, so people are afraid to be indoors. Many people are sleeping outside." Some of the areas believed to be worst hit by the quake are still not accessible except by air, due to road damage and mudslides.

CWS is establishing health camps in the affected areas which will serve 50,000 to 100,000 people and is planning to assist 15,000 families with food items, shelter kits and house reconstruction kits.

International aid was slow in coming. The Canadian government donated \$20 million and agreed to match individual donations given to approved charities by Oct. 26. PWS&D is on that list and is sending funds to ACT.

Donations can be made through your congregation by clearly marking your gift "PWS&D – Pakistan Earthquake" or by calling 1-800-619-7301. — *PWS&D*

< Continued from page 11 |

The position also had a strong emphasis on education, with Reed fulfilling many speaking engagements in Canada, informing Canadians of what was happening in Central America and helping to bring missionaries to the region. Now that numerous partnerships have been established and the national church works with them directly, Reed said there is no longer a

need to have someone doing this for the church.

Having just finished a sabbatical year, Reed will return to Central America for a month to visit partners and colleagues to say farewell and to bring closure to the ministry of area liaison.

"The Life and Mission Agency will continue to work with Rev. Joe Reed as he dis-

cerns the future and enters a transition phase within his ministry," the statement said. Fee declined to elaborate, and although Reed wouldn't divulge any details, he said he has "some irons in the fire."

Both Reed and Fee are former moderators of the church. A minute of appreciation will be presented to the General Assembly in June 2006. — *AM*





## 'God kept me alive for some purpose'

MARCEL GINCHEREAU hasn't always been in such good spirits. At 43, he has lived a life of homelessness, drug addiction and alcohol dependency. A battle with schizophrenia that is now controlled with medication was a source of many ills. Now clean and sober for four years, he credits Evangel Hall and a strong devotion to God for turning his life around. "I was a real mess when I came here. You wouldn't recognize me," said Ginchereau, during an interview at Evangel Hall. "If God was not around, I'd be dead. He kept me alive for some purpose. I don't know what it is yet, but one day I will."

Ginchereau volunteers almost daily at Evangel Hall, helping to clean, serve coffee during drop-in hours and to attend Sunday worship. He's excited for the new building to be finished, as he will be moving into one of the 84 low-income units available for those in need. "I'll have my own apartment for the first time in my life," he said. "Just to have my own shower and my own toilet. And I want a cat. That will be big for me. I'm happy now, but that will be even better."

His own family – mother, sister and brother – live in Montreal. He lost his dad a few months ago, and Evangel Hall gave him the money he needed for a bus ticket so he could attend the funeral. He's grateful for the generosity he has found there, admitting that the staff are like family. "God wants good things for you," he said. "And I've got good things since I came here."

"Evangel Hall is a good thing for people who want to change. And if people want to believe, then having God in your life can change your life." – AM

## Inner-city mission readies for big move

Evangel Hall, a Toronto inner-city mission of the Presbyterian Church, is getting ready to open its brand new \$13-million facility by the end of this year. Its 84 low-income housing units should be ready for tenants in January. Construction began in June 2004. "It's been a long dream, with lots of hurdles to overcome," said Joseph Taylor, executive director.

One of the biggest hurdles has been raising enough money to finance the project. The federal government contributed almost \$3 million, while donations and the sale of their current building (in use since 1913) totaled nearly \$4.5 million. A near \$2-million loan from the city of Toronto and a \$3.5-million mortgage made up the difference.

To pay back the borrowed funds, Evangel Hall launched Campaign Dignity, a \$6-million fundraiser to ensure future funds are used for programming rather than paying interest. So far, they've raised about \$1 million. "It's gathering steam," said Taylor. "Congregations have been very supportive. They're welcoming us with open arms, and they're excited to do what they can to support us."

Evangel Hall serves 50,000 meals annually, with about 50 to 200 people dropping in for meals daily. The service is the one most used at the hall. "It's their centre of belonging," said Taylor of the mostly homeless adult males who come to eat. "It's their social time."

Seventeen staff and about 50 volunteers keep the numerous programs running, including worship services, fellowship gatherings, special outings and activities, addiction support and meetings, community dinners, youth programs, a used clothing store, housing assistance and a voluntary trust service helping clients manage their income. With limited space, outdated facilities and the urgent need for more affordable housing in the city, the staff and board of Evangel Hall decided it was time for a new facility.

The new six-storey building is located just two blocks from the old facility and will feature a medical clinic, private spaces for counselling, computer access, an expanded thrift store, increased office space, designated youth program rooms, a larger drop-in area, a chapel and wheelchair accessibility. A roof-top patio and garden will also be available, enhancing the quality of life for the 130 residents who will live in the fully furnished apartments. Ninety people have already applied and will be selected based on economic need, homelessness and to a lesser extent, the ability to live in a close community. Thirty units have been set aside for people with diagnosed mental health issues. Laundry facilities and a teaching kitchen will also be available for residents.

Affordable housing is defined as rental rates that equal 30 per cent of gross income. Since an average individual on social assistance earns \$535 a month, they would pay about \$160 for rent. An Ontario grant supplement will help bring the monthly contribution up to about \$1,000, enabling the facility to function. – AM

To donate to Campaign Dignity, call (416) 504-3563 ext. 230.



# Churches tackle school bullying

An ecumenical group gathered in Winnipeg to discuss the challenges of bullying and how the church can help stop it. As an initiative of the Presbyterian Church's Child and Youth Advisory Committee, formed in 2002, the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Bullying Initiative created steps it could take to raise awareness of the problem.

"It was an event of great energy and great commitment," said Dorothy Henderson, associate secretary for Christian Education. "We hope that by raising church peoples' awareness of bullying, it will enable them to become advocates in their communities."

Although they didn't have any statistics on how often bullying occurs inside church walls — be it at a youth group, Sunday school, or church function—the group did have experience with the problem. "We told stories of people being coerced, belittled and made to feel bad in church," said Henderson. "Church is a microcosm of society. We don't like to think it [bullying] happens there, but it does."

It certainly happens in Canadian schools. According to the Toronto Board of

Education, one child in five between grades four to eight is victimized periodically, while one in 12 is bullied weekly or daily. According to Debra Pepler, a researcher at the LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution at York University, bullying occurs once every seven minutes on elementary school playgrounds. Numerous strategies have been devised to bring the numbers down, and Henderson believes that as long as a commitment to stop bullying remains in the public consciousness, the situation will improve.

To this end, the committee established numerous short and long term goals including creating posters and writing articles that dispel myths and misconceptions, tying initiatives to the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence, gaining television and website exposure, producing sermon notes and bulletin inserts on bullying, creating a pos-

sible addition to the appendix of the Presbyterian Church's Leading with Care document and planning lessons to be used in Sunday schools.

The group was comprised of representatives from Presbyterian, Anglican, Mennonite, United Church and Christian Reformed traditions. The October gathering was the next step for a committee that had spent several years educating themselves on bullying and how the church might become involved. They devised a definition for the term, saying bullying "demonstrates contempt" and is "a sign of spiritual crisis." They said the church can be a "place of healing and reconciliation" for both bullies and their victims, and has "a unique place to nurture and restore right relationships." — AM

## Dorothy suggests...

*Dorothy Henderson, associate secretary for Christian education shares some of her favourite books for youth leaders, teachers and parents.*

**All Kids are Our Kids**, Peter Benson, Jossey-Bass. This truly inspiring book reminds us that it takes a village to raise children, and churches play an important role.

**Equipping the Saints**, Sara Coven Juengst, Westminster John Knox. If I had room for only one book on my shelf, this would be it! It has three parts. Each has 13 easy-to-do workshops—Basic Bible, What Presbyterians Believe, Practical Skills.

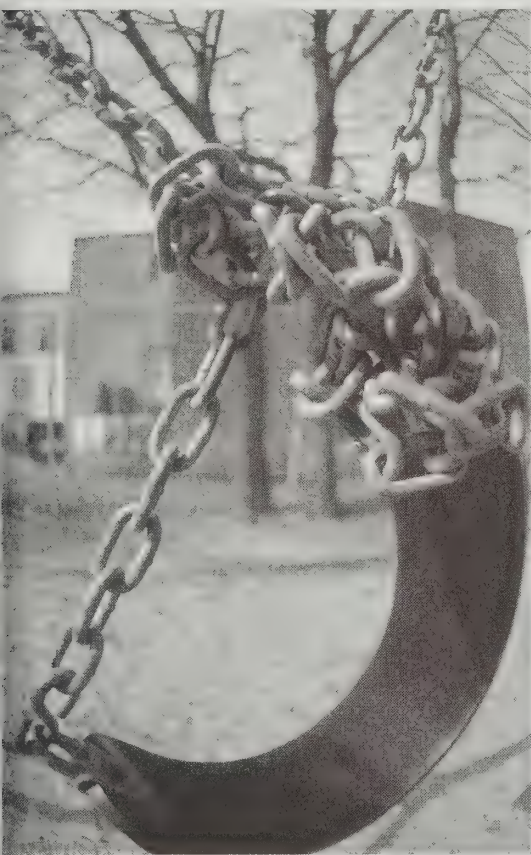
**Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry**, Ginny Ward Holderness, Westminster John Knox. This is a practical, common-sense approach to working and having fun with youth and helping them develop leadership skills.

**God, Kids & Us: The Growing Edge of Ministry with Children and the People Who Care for Them**, Janet Marshal Eibner and Susan Graham Walker, United Church Publishing and Anglican Book Centre. This book covers the range of practical ways to work with kids in churches—worship, Sunday school, service.

**The Family Story Bible**, Ralph Milton, Northstone. The gentle, soft storytelling and drawings of Milton and artist, Margaret Kyle, make this a must for every church library, Sunday school room and home.

**Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning**, Jack L. Seymour, Abingdon. This book offers models for how Christian education can happen in congregations—spiritual growth, justice orientation (transformation), community-based, religious instruction.

**Will Our Children Have Faith?**, John Westerhoff, Seabury Press. How can a 35-year-old book feel so fresh and new? Westerhoff's "old" ideas are full of vitality and feel right for this time.





## Churches and Ottawa responsible for abuse

THE SUPREME COURT of Canada recently overturned a B.C. Court of Appeal ruling saying that the United Church is partially responsible for abuse incurred by students at its Port Alberni Indian Residential School. The unanimous decision found that the church is 25 per cent liable for damages, along with the federal government which assumes 75 per cent responsibility.

"I think this is a very positive step and probably establishes some pretty important principles that apply well beyond residential schools," said deputy prime minister Anne McLellan, as reported by the Canadian Press.

Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin found that the previous government policy of taking aboriginal children from their homes and forcing them into residential schools, does not, of itself, constitute a wrong. "For that, the law requires specific wrongful acts causally connected to damage suffered."

Claims for physical and mental abuse were barred because of a time limitation in the law, while sexual abuse claims were deemed to be valid. McLachlin also found no reason to increase the damages awarded by the lower courts. — *with files from CP*

## Christians changing China

PROFESSOR YING FUK TSANG, a divinity professor in Hong Kong, believes "the upsurge of Christianity is really a potential destabilising factor in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party," which is concerned that the concept of democracy might be spread by the Protestant church, impacting on the social situation of the state.

"Such growth was seen mainly in rural villages in the past," but has already spread to big cities like Beijing. Among converts are university students and entrepreneurs, "showing that the urban population has an increasing interest in seeking the meaning of life," said Ying.

Of China's 1.3 billion people, the government has officially noted 14 million as Protestant Christians. However, various sources set that figure as high as 70 million. Ying believes 30-40 million is more accurate.

— *Elinor Wong and Francis Wong, ENI*

## Colombia's indigenous groups caught in the middle

*No end in sight to dirty civil war*

Victoria Neuta's dark, warm eyes look to the floor before she speaks. She is thinking of the conflict in her country and the perils that fighting for peace can bring. As coordinator of women's affairs for the National Indigenous Organization in Colombia (ONIC), Neuta helps indigenous Colombians negotiate land disputes with the government, and supports the work of women within their communities. She has watched as indigenous men and women are pushed off their land, are wrongfully arrested and raped, have their freedoms restricted, disappear and are even killed. She knows her work is dangerous. "When we go out, we know something could happen," said Neuta, speaking through a translator during a recent visit to Toronto. "But I don't think about it. We just continue with our work."

The Central American country of Colombia has been embroiled in a brutal civil war for more than 40 years that has killed about 200,000 people. Dubbed by the UN as the worst humanitarian crisis in the western hemisphere, Colombia's struggles seem to be far from over. Human rights violations such as disappearances, kidnappings and murders are rampant in many areas of the country, whether under guerilla or paramilitary control.

As a result of the dispute, Colombia has the highest number of internally displaced people in the hemisphere and is second in the world to Sudan. A total of three million people have already been displaced — with 300,000 in the last year alone. Colombians are being forced from their homes, or are fleeing for their lives to refugee camps or neighbouring countries.

Indigenous Colombians, who comprise about two per cent of the population, have been badly affected. Neuta said they are ignored by the government, left without social services and needed supplies, while their land is turned over to big businesses interested in the country's natural resources. In turn, indigenous groups are either controlled by paramilitaries and isolated from others, or are driven off their land, left on their own to find other areas to settle. "Malnutrition, illness, death and social problems are emerging in border communities because no one is caring for

**A traditional home in a rural area of Colombia, where indigenous people are being driven off their land.**





The National Indigenous Organization in Colombia works with indigenous groups, helping them assert their rights. A young indigenous girl is pictured in a region where the group is active.

them,” said Neuta, her voice rising as she lists the injustices. “And the newest phenomenon is an increase in suicide.”

The war is being fought by government paramilitaries and guerilla movements (namely the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which Canada lists as a terrorist organization). Land claims are at the root of the problem; stemming from the country’s severely unbalanced land distribution. Three per cent of the population owns

70 per cent of the land – a serious problem when about 23 million Colombians live below the poverty line. “No matter what action is taken, it affects indigenous people,” Neuta said. “It’s like being in the middle of a sandwich.”

Control of the country’s massive drug industry compounds the problem. Colombia is the world’s leading cultivator of coca, the plant used to make cocaine, and supplies 90 per cent of the United States’ cocaine market. Aerial crop fumigation – intended to eradicate coca crops – remains controversial, as many legitimate crops are also affected and the health of farmers is compromised. Neuta said cancer, skin problems and newborn deformities are all on the rise in areas where fumigation has continued for several years. She said indigenous groups told the government they would get rid of the coca crops manually, but their offer was refused. “Indigenous people have their own ways of doing things,” she said, her words tumbling out quickly. “We’re not on one side. We want to stay out of it. But we must defend our territory and fight for unity and our culture.”

Neuta’s passion for ending human rights abuses and promoting peace is evident as her eyes once again well up while discussing her motivation to continue her work. “It is the hope that we give to many indigenous communities,” she said, her gaze resolute despite the tears. “I need to be a voice for those who are not listened to. I’m motivated by their efforts to live and by the women who struggle. I want the government to be fair and to provide justice to all. We want to have peace.” – AM

## More religion, please

AN IPSOS-REID SURVEY for the Centre for Faith and the Media has found that Canadians are tired of fluff on TV and in our newspapers. Apparently, we’re craving something a bit more meaty...

- 27% of Canadians say that faith and religion have too little coverage in the media. A full 49% feel that there is the right amount of coverage of issues relating to faith and religion while 21% believes that there is too much.
- Men were more likely than women (26% versus 16%) to feel that there was too much coverage of faith and religion in the media.
- 22% would like to see more business and analysis in media coverage. 62% feel that there is about the right amount. Only 13% feel there is more than they’d like in the news.
- Of those polled, people aged 18-55 were more likely to say that there should be more coverage of business and analysis.
- 42% of Canadians say that there is too much about entertainment in the media. Only 9% feel that there could be more entertainment news.
- While 52% believe that sports have about the right amount of coverage, 38% indicate that there is too much in the news.

(The Ipsos-Reid poll was conducted from April 5-7, 2005, and surveyed 1,000 randomly selected adult Canadians. National results are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points.)

## One step forward, two steps back

THE UN’S COMMISSION on Human Rights met in March where a statement was made by the chairman that was highly critical of the situation in Colombia. The statement is what John Lewis, KAIROS’ international human rights specialist for Latin America, calls a victory for grassroots initiatives working towards peace. “There is a vibrant civil society in Colombia and it needs as much support as the international community can give it,” he said. “They’re the ones who will bring people together and defend human rights.” KAIROS stands for Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, which supports peace-building programs in Colombia.

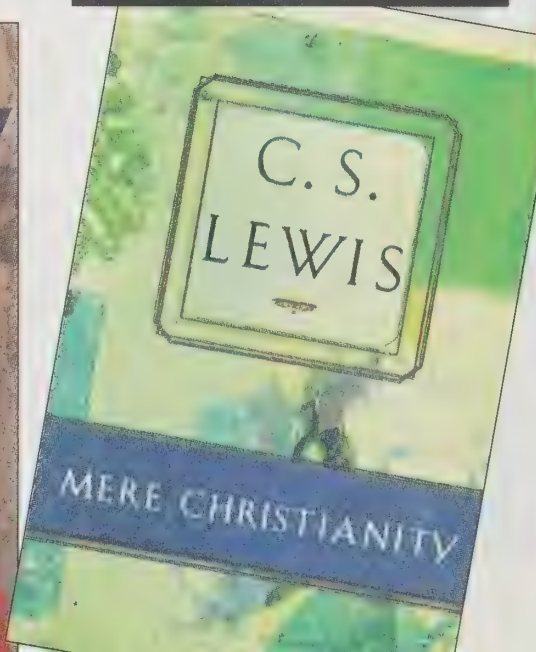
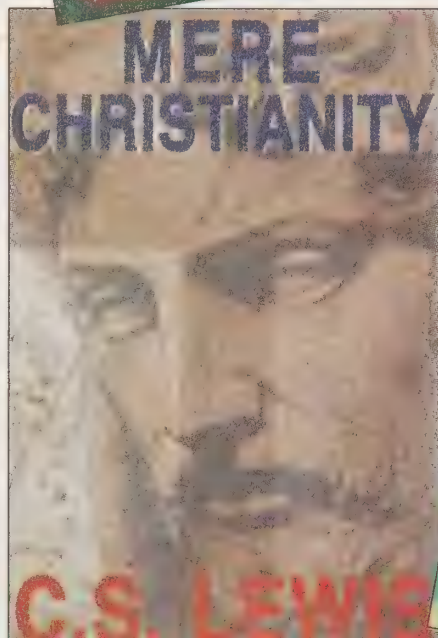
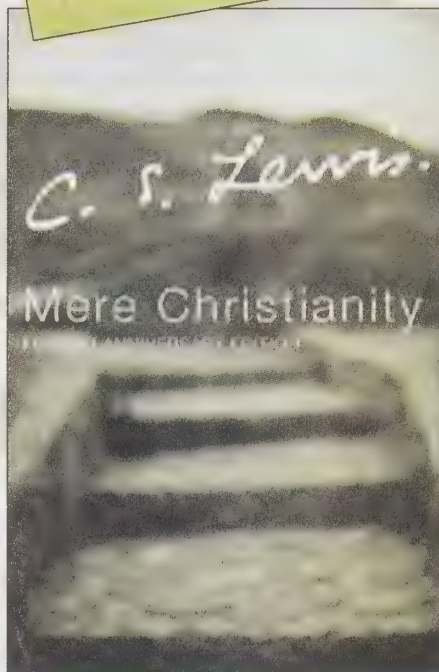
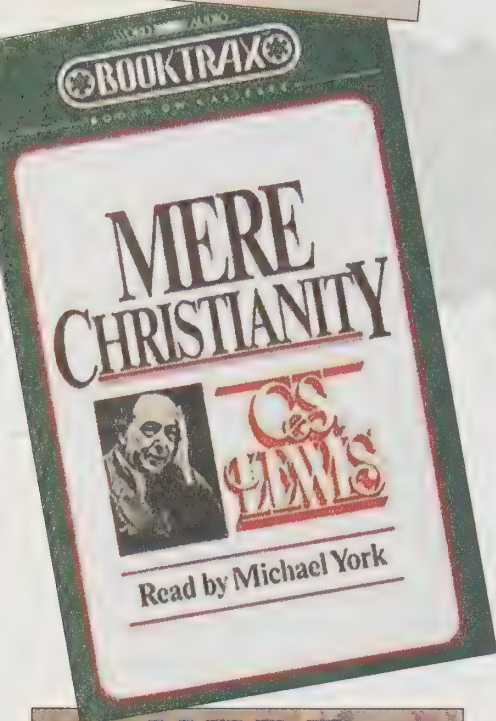
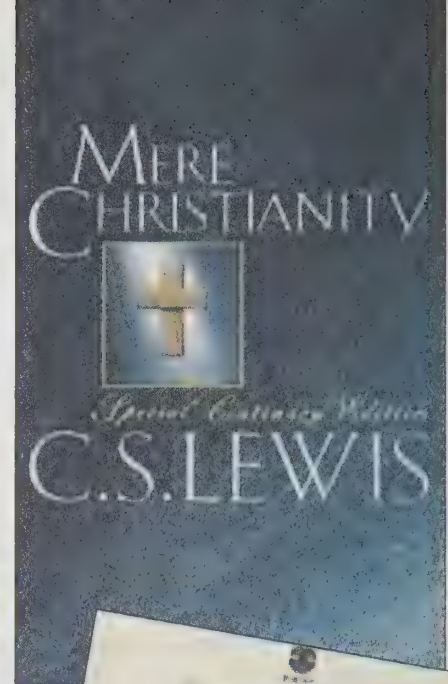
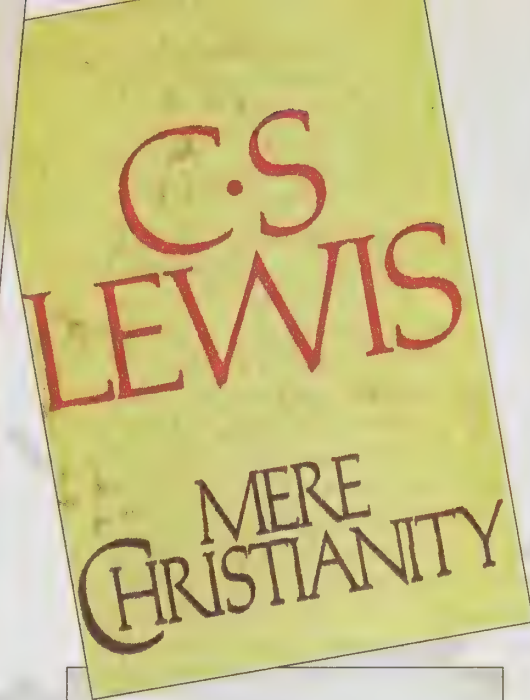
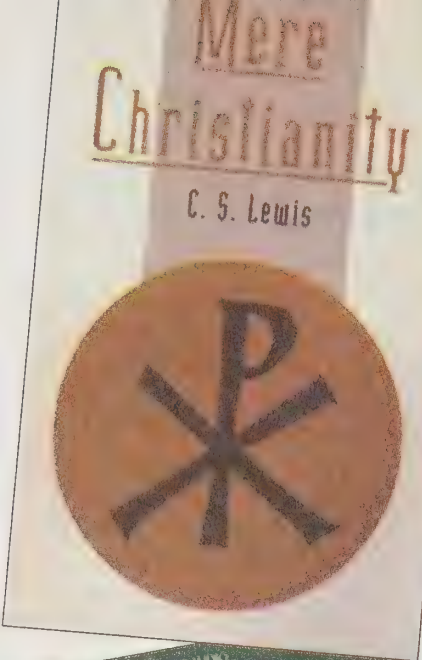
However, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, which lobbies the federal government to take a stand against human rights violations in Colombia, doesn’t feel as positive about the statement. They said stronger words could have been used to describe the situation and a firmer commitment to help should have been made.

Compounding the council’s worries is a recent Colombian government document that was sent to international ambassadors and agencies. The “International Cooperation Project Focus Guidelines” made clear that the phrase “internal armed conflict” is not to be used when referring to the situation in Colombia, and “humanitarian situation” cannot be used in a way that is limited only to the actions of government forces.

These and other changes were made without consulting the G-24 countries and civil society sectors it concerns, ignoring a previous agreement and thwarting the positive dialogue they previously shared. The council has urged Canada to make a public statement denouncing the document.

Nadja Drost, coordinator of the CCIC’s Americas Policy Group, is disappointed with the letter. She said it’s an attempt by the government to shift international perception of the conflict. “They’re describing it as black and white; terrorists against non-terrorists.” She said the document has “ruffled the feathers of international donors,” and calls it a “definite step backwards.” – AM





# Portrait of Christianity today



“Ever since I became a Christian I have thought that the best, perhaps the only service, I could do for my unbelieving neighbours was to explain and defend the belief that has been common to nearly all Christians at all times.” — *Mere Christianity*

*C. S. Lewis* has sold more than 200 million books worldwide since the 1920s; and has been translated into dozens of languages. For half a century he averaged a million English book sales a year, and in the past 15 years that number has nearly doubled. About 150 books have been published about him over the past half-century (including a biography by *Record* columnist Michael Coren). *Shadowlands*, a movie about his marriage, was released 12 years ago; and this month comes the first of the Disney produced movies based on Lewis's allegorical novels *The Chronicles of Narnia*. (There have been several less ambitious versions produced over the years.) Nearly all of his 38 books remain in print.

Clive Staples Lewis was born in 1898. His mother died when he was 10 and he was wounded at age 20 while serving as a second lieutenant. The next year he published his first book, a collection of poems, *Spirits in Bondage*. He dreamed of being a great poet, but never achieved that goal. In his early-thirties, a year after his father's death, he converted to Christianity. He didn't take this shift from atheism lightly, describing the process as “kicking and screaming” in *Surprised by Joy*. Most of his books deal with this joy—the science fiction novels, the children's allegories and, most of all, the apologetics. He died the same day as Aldous Huxley and John F. Kennedy.

One of his most popular titles is *Mere Christianity*, published in 1952 (the same year he met his wife, who was to die tragically eight years later). The book grew out of radio lectures he did on the BBC in the early 1940s (during the war). The lectures were then published as separate titles during the 40s, and collected in *Mere Christianity*. The book has not been out of print since then; and of the thousands of religion titles published over the decades is still one of the easiest to find in a local bookstore.

What is Lewis's lure? Certainly his prose is clean and concise, his language, occasionally on the academic side, is accessible. He has the touch of the popular professor: bright, interesting and approachable. But, is that it?

The *Record* invited eight people to read Lewis's apologetics. Some were familiar with Lewis, others were introduced to him through this exercise. They are ministers, lay, academics, elders and youth. Each of them brings a unique perspective. They worked under the assumed premise that Lewis's popularity makes him one of the most influential theological writers since the Second World War. Individually, they seek to understand this influence, but collectively, they are participating in a dialogue with each other that creates an insightful portrait of Christianity today.



"Until you have given up your self to Him you will not have a real self." – MERE CHRISTIANITY

## Making a simple choice

by Duncan Cameron

**L**ritten more than 50 years ago, Lewis's words lay before us the most important choice we will ever be asked to make: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." It was a choice I consciously made for the first time nearly 30 years ago. The clear, winning logic of *Mere Christianity* continues to remind me what an obvious choice it ought to be.

Although I've been a devotee of Lewis for most of my life, reading *The Four Loves* this fall was a first for me. After reading as much of Lewis's work as I have, I should have been prepared for his clarity of thought and marvellous use of language. Yet I found myself in fresh awe of his ability to express those things that, deep down, so many of us know to be true, but which we so often struggle to articulate.

In the introduction to *The Four Loves*, Lewis makes the powerful distinction between gift-love and need-love. Divine love, he says, is gift-love. It always has the loved one as its focus. need-love, however, is always somewhat self-interested. It recognizes the loved one as the source of something the lover needs. Obviously, we human beings are capable, at times, of both gift-love and of need-love.

In distinguishing between these two, Lewis himself came to a radical discovery: that we most resemble God when, as human beings, we demonstrate gift-love; yet we come closest to God, in terms of our relationship with Him, when we approach him in need-love. "A very strange corollary follows. Man approaches God most nearly when he is in one sense least like God. For what can be more unlike than fullness and need, sovereignty and humility, righteousness and penitence, limitless power and a cry for help?" What a powerful reminder that our relationship with God has as its very foundation not a comparison by which we are measured against God, but a miracle by which his gift meets our need. What a wonderful reminder to be offered in the weeks leading up to our celebration of the miracle itself! – Duncan Cameron is the pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, Ont., (and is eagerly looking forward to the release of the movie version of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* this month).



"(Consciousness) is either inexplicable illusion, or else revelation." – THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

## Rational but not spiritual

by Harris Athanasiadis

**H**aving converted to Christianity from atheism, Lewis writes as an apologist, as one with a special passion for persuading the non-believer about the believability of Christianity. But in order to do this, Lewis has to argue several things, themselves, perhaps, debatable. First, Lewis argues that the things that divide Christians have to do with the fine points of doctrine. If one strips doctrine down to the bare essentials, there is a common core, a (mere) Christianity that binds the Christian tradition together. But is this true? And if it is true, can we trust that Lewis has got this (mere) Christianity down pat, without introducing some of his own theological bias? Secondly, Lewis suggests that doctrine is not necessarily essential to faith, that one can leave it to the specialists, so to speak, and develop a sufficient Christianity without it. Again, is this true?

His (mere) Christianity is not sufficient to the task, and in order to fill out the contours of the faith, he introduces ideas that are theologically slanted and subject to debate. Socially, for instance, he is a leftist, and argues that biblical Christianity cannot support any form of competitive capitalism, and this even includes the whole idea of charging interest on loans. He must confess that the closest type of economic system to what the Bible

espouses is socialism. In the area of personal or sexual morality, on the other hand, Lewis is highly conservative, going so far as to suggest that the Christian/biblical view recognizes an inherent hierarchy of male over female in the marital or familial unit.

On a deeper level, Lewis seems to compromise basic Reformational tenets about the priority of grace over good works and the fact that God justifies us sinners and claims us fully as children, regardless of how much we advance on the path toward sanctity in this life. Even though Lewis is enough of a Protestant to know some of this, he is essentially a moralist who links being saved with becoming a nicer, better, more moral human being. The big sin, according to him, is pride, but he says nothing about the other pole of sin which is equally insidious, that of indifference or sloth (sometimes cloaked under cynicism, or else, cloaking fear), also part of core Christian teaching, and perhaps more true to us living in the new millennium than it was in Lewis's day.

His rational arguments for the believability of Christianity, do, I believe, make some sense for those who like to base some of their faith on rational arguments. But it is also true that I, for one, live in a time and place (specialists call it post-modern) where spiritual experience is more compelling a way into faith than rational argument, and a relationship with the Jesus of the gospels does more to challenge and provoke my faith than arguments drawn from natural law or the law of human nature.

— Harris Athanasiadis is minister St. Mark's, Don Mills, Toronto.



*"Of all bad men religious bad men are the worst."*

—REFLECTIONS ON THE PSALMS

## Sexist, dated, mere opinion

by Laura Smith



Right off the top, I am going to admit that *Mere Christianity* was a difficult read for me. Besides the war imagery to which I am (thankfully) not able to relate and the extensive use of "men" when discussing the entire human race, some of the discussions were ones I find hard to hear. Christianity has changed in the 53 years since C. S. Lewis wrote the book.

Lewis has some valuable things to say—ideas that can still be applied. I enjoyed the chapter on the countless ways through which Christ works—through nature, through books, through difficult experiences, through our friends, through us. I could relate to the section on the difficulty of living as a Christian. It is a challenge to wake up every morning with renewed energy to follow God in everything you do. I also liked Lewis's identification of the simple reason for being of the church—to draw 'men' to God continually.

There are other sections of the book, however, which I would not want someone to think are my beliefs. The chapter on marriage is explicit that the man is the head of the household. Yikes. Yes, I guess it applied in biblical times and it probably even applied in 1952, but it does not apply in all marriages today. I cringe at Lewis's claim that, "the relations of the family to the outer world must depend, in the last resort, upon the man, because he always ought to be, and usually is, much more just to the outsiders."

Some topics that are central to Christian life in 2005 are omitted, like environmental stewardship, for example. I see taking care of God's earth and the resources he has given us as important in my living out my life as a Christian. There is no mention of it in the book, nor of any other kind of stewardship we see as being so important today. There are other key issues as well: inter-faith relations and dialogue, economic justice and global inequality. These are all issues which confront me daily, and to which I respond based on my Christian beliefs.

This is not a book I would recommend to friends who wanted to learn about Christianity today. Lewis set out to write a book on the common Christianity. But the common Christianity of 1952 is not the common Christianity of 2005. Mind you, it is not God that is changing, rather, our perceptions of God are changing. God is not a static thing, and we need to look to the one true leader of our faith for direction and guidance. Mere Christianity, as far as I'm concerned, is looking to God *constantly* for guidance. — Laura Smith is a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and a student at the University of Toronto.



*"Morality or duty...never yet made a man happy in himself or dear to others."* —ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE 16TH CENTURY

## Understanding the perfect penitent

by Barbara Stuart



Although I have been reasonably active in church work for most of my life, after listening to (I used audio tapes, it was a radio broadcast first, after all) and reading *Mere Christianity* I realized that my understanding of Christian doctrine was very shallow and immature. For example, I did not know the differences between pantheism and dualism. I did not know that earning interest on investments was unchristian. Lewis's lengthy description of Christ as the "perfect penitent" helped me understand the great significance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross from a different perspective. Some of his ideas clarified some misunderstandings I had. For example, I have always had trouble accepting the notion that heaven is only accessible if people take Jesus as their personal saviour. What about all those people who have not had



the opportunity to learn and accept Christ? I found comfort in Lewis's explanation that "we know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know him can be saved through Him." God has not revealed what happens to the others, according to Lewis.

Knowing the biblical direction about Christian marriage and divorce, I was interested in hearing his discussion of them. In my opinion, Lewis's explanation of why a man should be the head of household in a Christian marriage was very weak and insulting to both men and women. It denies the God-given gifts men and women possess. However, I did agree with his suggestion that there should be two distinct types of marriages: one governed by the state, which applies to all marriages, and another that is religious, which applies only to those in a specific community. It sounds to me that this approach has merit for the current discussions of same-sex marriage.

Lewis uses analogies to amplify his points, of which many are grounded in the experience of wartime. Further, some of his explanations are clearly out of date. For example, he talks about homosexuality as a "perversion." This was the wisdom of Lewis's day but inaccurate according to current findings in human biology. Also, he has a chapter entitled Christianity And Psychoanalysis, which was interesting to read, but surely a reflection of the times in which he wrote. Lastly, words like prudence, temperance, fortitude are not commonly used today and may send the message to a younger reader that these notions are out of date.

Although it was not an easy read, when I took the time to study it and think about the ideas, it gave me a good grounding. I feel better prepared to understand the arguments presented by contemporary authors who advocate reforms to Christian practices and church doctrine. Having said that, I think it would not be a book that I would recommend to someone who had little or no previous background in the life of the Christian church. — Barbara Stuart is a member of Knox, Kincardine, Ont., and was recently ordained as an elder.



"I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia." — THE SILVER CHAIR

## Dated, with pleasant surprises

by Stuart Macdonald



*Mere Christianity* is remarkably autobiographical in detailing C.S. Lewis's own questions as he moved from atheism to Christianity. Questions he posed, insights he gained and understandings he reached are all shared. He does not assume his reader knows too much and so he deals with basic issues in a clear and concise way. This is one of the great strengths of the book, regardless of whether or not we agree with his particular interpretation of the issue at hand. At the same time this rational description and defence of the faith is being made from within a culture sympathetic to and supportive of Christianity, which, if not the religion of everyone, was still the religion that people were expected to have and one which received considerable support—such as BBC radio broadcasts.

Yet throughout *Mere Christianity* Lewis writes as if this were not so. He seems to perceive Christians are a minority, and doesn't recognize the extent to which Christian values still permeated British culture. "I have said that we should never get a Christian society unless most of us became Christian individuals" Lewis notes at one point. Throughout the book he divides Christians from non-Christians.

It was assumption about living in a largely non-Christian society, when the Great Britain of the time was culturally Christian, that I found to be the most distracting feature of the book. It dates *Mere Christianity* more even than some of the cultural assumptions about gender which shape the section on Christian behaviour.

There were pleasant surprises and much of value in *Mere Christianity*. Lewis was markedly ahead of his time in terms of reaching out across the chasm that divided Roman Catholics from other Christians in the 1940s and 1950s, including them with Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists in his understanding of the church Catholic who all shared in a mere or common Christianity. As well, the theory of evolution did not present a problem for Lewis. Indeed there is no sense in the book of a conflict between science and Christian faith.

All works of apologetics such as *Mere Christianity* strive to answer our questions about faith. Their value is always greatest when they give voice to our struggles and provide answers to our questions. It doesn't take too much imagination to recognize that C.S. Lewis effectively did this for his audience during and immediately following the war. It is this which accounts for the book's appeal and influence.

The difficulty is that the situation has changed dramatically. (Again, I am not protesting this change, merely noting it.) Chris-



tianity no longer has the kind of privileged place it held in Britain or Canada when Lewis presented his radio addresses. Our questions are different, and the resources we will need to address them are different. While a wonderful book for its time, *Mere Christianity* will not be nearly as helpful for us living in Canada today. — Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald is the Director of Basic Degree Studies and Theological Field Education, and Associate Professor of Church and Society at Knox College.



*"He who surrenders himself without reservation to the temporal claims of a nation, or a party, or a class is rendering to Caesar that which, of all things, most emphatically belongs to God: himself..."* — TRANSPOSITION AND OTHER ADDRESSES

## Delving into the depths of theology

by Richard Topping



It is almost impossible to read Lewis without cribbing his material. Among the phrases that caught my attention on this reading of *Mere Christianity*: "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man." In his section on sexual morality, Lewis compares the animal self with the much more serious diabolical self and comments: "That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer hell than a prostitute." And then he adds, with a twinkle in his eye: "But, of course, it is better to be neither!" Lewis's ability to express a matter in a fresh way also serves to promote deeper thought. He says that "bad people" lead sheltered lives since they, always giving in to evil, have never entered into the struggle of resistance against it. "No man knows how bad he is until he has tried very hard to be good." Finally, Lewis offers the sobering and realistic saying: "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive."

Lewis gives the distinct impression that the Christian faith has things to say that an atheist doesn't already know. His work exudes a gentle confidence in the content of Christian faith and he deploys central Christian teachings and ideas in a manner that demonstrate their ability to make sense of the world. That's the central strength of the book. He is not in full retreat trying to accommodate Christian faith to current ideas. Chapter four, The Perfect Penitent, is a wonderful example of Lewis's defense and explanation of Atonement. Masterfully, he holds the heavy theological term, Atonement, to the end of the chapter so that the penny drops only after he has cleared away the debris of misunderstanding around the word. Lewis, like Kathleen Norris (*Amazing Grace*), rehabilitates theological language by putting terms to work, illuminating life.

Lewis is not an obscurantist, however. He shows a critical

appreciation of new learning. He finds, for example, that Freudian psychoanalysis is helpful and "not in the least contradictory to Christianity." Indeed there are areas of overlap. And yet, Lewis also says that while we might follow Freud when he talks about curing neurotics. Freud is ignorant when he is talking off his subject in the areas of language and philosophy. Lewis doesn't propose that we reinterpret the faith through the lens of Freudian psychology for the sake of relevance; he looks for overlaps and similarities but also identifies the areas where the faith, if it is going to keep to the facts, has its own integrity.

In his chapter on time he realizes his own thoughts, helpful and interesting though they may be, are not essential. He tells the reader, "You can be a perfectly good Christian without accepting it his explanation, or indeed without thinking about the matter at all." He counsels patience and prayer when the whole of the faith doesn't come clear at once. Wisely, he also makes the point that while there are different metaphors for expression of our faith commitment (born-again, for example), "do not start quarrelling with others because they use a different formula from yours." Even though he is engaged in patient explanation, Lewis notes that Christianity at points is hard to understand, and can't all be made utterly simple. "We are dealing with facts. Of course, anyone can be simple if he has no facts to bother with." Lewis also, against the advice of some of his advisors who told him to keep to practical religion, plumbs the depths of theology—the science of God. He explains, "I do not think the ordinary reader is such a fool... You are not children; why should you be treated as children." — Reverend Dr. Richard Topping is Senior Minister at The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, Quebec.



*Now that I am a Christian I do not have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable: but when I was an atheist I had moods in which Christianity looked terribly probable."*

— MERE CHRISTIANITY

## Finding Christ and everything else

by Barb Alston



S. Lewis depicts Christianity as a hallway with doorways going into various rooms. You can't live in the hallway—you have to pick a room. Hence the different denominations. He urges us to be kind to those who have chosen different doors and to those who are still in the hall. This makes the point that he is talking about Christianity, not any particular denomination. This is useful in our thinking about the different denominations today. It is necessary for us each to find a place where we feel at home and can express our faith.



His discussion of right and wrong as clues to the meaning of the universe is a detailed treatise, going where we usually care to tread—the existence of a moral law. The fact that we have broken it and put ourselves wrong with the power behind it. It is when this is realized that “Christianity begins to talk.” Facing the “terrifying facts” and, at the same time, the questions that Christianity claims to answer. In other words, if Christ came to save us, what is he coming to save us from?

Lewis’s response is powerful. “Either this man was and is, the Son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit on Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.”

The relationship of loving self and neighbour and God, and understanding how they are interrelated, depends on loving God. This begins by obeying God.

Our choices are a combination of making a choice and realizing the various feelings and impulses that are the raw material of that choice. “Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance”

Lewis argues that theology is like a map of learning and thinking about Christian doctrines. Doctrines are not God, they are only a kind of map. “It is not safe going to sea without a map.”

This, I believe, has been the struggle of the church throughout the ages—determining the accuracy of our maps. The struggle is timeless.

Lewis talks about drawing us into the “personal life” of God. He uses a parable from the writings of George MacDonald about what God is doing in our lives: “You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage. But He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

He also makes a powerful comparison—Christ’s work of making a new man to the process of tuning a horse into a winged creature. “Not mere improvement but transformation.”

This last part is truly amazing because I got the general sense of God taking over, all powerful, doing so much beyond our thinking and imagining.

The more we get of the way and let Him take us over, the more truly ourselves we become.

The last sentence of the book stands by itself: “But look for Christ and you will find Him and with Him everything else thrown in.” – Barb Alston is the minister at Melita, Manitoba.



*“Atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning...”* – MERE CHRISTIANITY

## Finding the shortest way home

by Erin Woods



ere Christianity is a tough concept. I was never sure whether or not we really were the same religion under all of the layers of doctrines and rules and theologies, until C. S. Lewis helped to peel away all of those layers. Sure enough, as the doctrines and denominations fell away, something beautiful and pure was revealed. It was Christianity at its most innocent level, existing solely as the manifestation of forgiveness, love and faith.

If you check the contents of this book, you’ll see that Faith is there twice. That’s not an accident. The Bible tells us that faith is the most important of our Christian virtues. It’s also one of the hardest to manage. Every one, even the most devout believer, has some moments of doubt. Some experience them more often than others. Some are always skeptical. Lewis was once an atheist. Ironically, that is exactly why he was later able to be such a convincing advocate for Christianity; he knew all of the arguments. He also had an answer for every one of them and proved utterly and completely, to my mind, that God *must* exist. There is simply no alternative

Lewis writes: “Reality... is usually something you could not have guessed. That is why I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed. If it offered just the kind of universe we had always expected, I should feel we were making it up.” I like that point. It makes you feel better about the uncertainties in our religion, doesn’t it? If we were making things up, surely we would have come up with an answer for everything, instead of leaving holes. Like us, Christianity is human, seemingly incomplete and real.

Lewis must have been a very brave sort of person to write this book. It deals with some of our greatest questions and wonderings, and presumes to answer them all. It explains the Trinity, Satan, the concept of time and God’s place in it, love, forgiveness, pride, morality and, most impressively, Right and Wrong as a guide to the meaning of the universe. I am in awe simply writing this down. In fact, I’ve been in awe ever since I first read the table of contents. The rest of the book is even more incredible—every sentence was either a challenge or a revelation. And here I’ve been trying to fit all of that into one article! It really isn’t possible, and I’m not worthy of doing it.

So where am I going with all of this? Backwards, I hope. We as Christians have gotten off track. It’s time we went back to our wrong turn and started again. It will take a while—there’s no doubt about that. But the sooner we correct our mistakes, the less time we’ll spend going in the wrong direction. In this case, to quote Lewis, “The longest way round is the shortest way home.” – Erin Woods is a member of Calvin, North Bay, Ont. ☪

All quotations taken from the C. S. Lewis Quote Page,  
<http://www.comnett.net/~rex/cslewis.htm>

# Fairy stories say it best

*Aslan embodies saving grace and divine authority*

BY REBEKAH MITCHELL

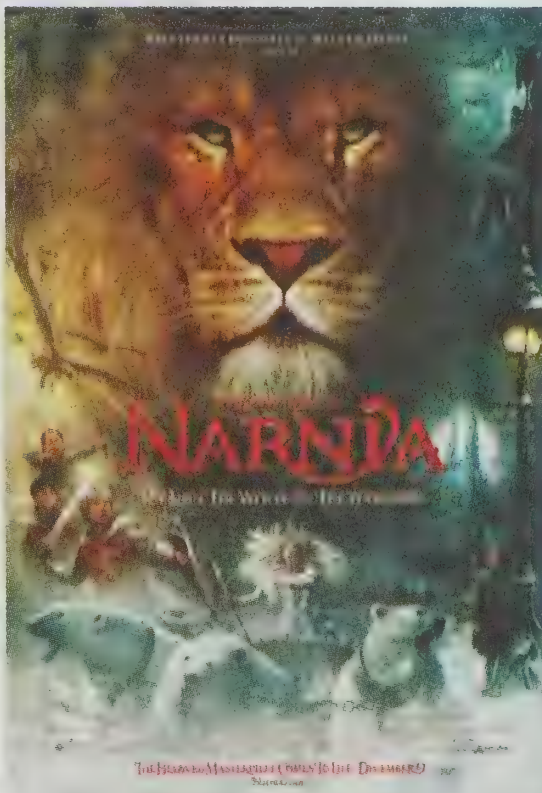
Why is it sometimes necessary to search outside of the formal writing of theologians to understand our faith? I am best able to understand the majesty of Christ not when I read Karl Barth, but when I look at the lion, Aslan. I am best able to imagine how evil works not when I read John Calvin, but when I consider the one ring and how it destroyed the life of Gollum. I am best able to grasp the courage of our convictions, not when I read Jurgen Moltmann, but when I see Harry Potter's refusal to be seduced by the power that Voldemort offers him.

For me, literature and faith have always walked hand in hand. Even as a young girl, when my father read a chapter a night of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* to my brother and I as bedtime stories, I could see echoes of the Christian faith in the adventures of Frodo. When Aragorn called Faramir out of a death-like sleep at the end of *The Return of the King*, I heard Christ calling Lazarus out of death.

When he'd finished with *Lord of the Rings*, Dad began to read us the *Narnia Chronicles*. Though I was a child, I understood that the way Lucy felt about Aslan was the way I felt about Jesus.

I grew up on these stories and so it is no great surprise that the first time I saw a preview of the current film *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, I grabbed my father's arm in the darkened theatre as tears filled my eyes.

With the advent of the first Narnia film from Disney comes a marketing opportunity, which means that a slew of



Narnia-related products will be hitting the shelves just before Christmas. One of these is *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C.S. Lewis's Chronicles*. This insightful collection of essays discusses topics such as whether the *Chronicles* are meant for adults or children, in which order they should properly be read and what effect his friendship with Tolkien had on how Lewis shaped and viewed the *Chronicles*.

My favourite essay is *Aslan Is On The Move: Images Of Providence In The Chronicles of Narnia* by Russell W. Dalton, the associate professor of Christian Education at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. Dalton examines how different facets of

Christ—his saving grace, his divine sovereignty, his inability to be tamed—are embodied in Aslan. He also spends some time answering the question I posed at the beginning of this article.

C.S. Lewis believed that Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said (the title of one of his essays). While it is a well-known fact that Lewis was never interested in writing a pure allegory, he did believe that something about "loose" allegory (the kind which we find in *Chronicles*) allows the human brain to better grasp the truths of the Christian faith. While scholars debate Lewis's original intent in writing the *Chronicles*, there is no doubt that some of what he imagined in Narnia clarifies his theology in a way that is imaginative and free from the constraints of more formal writing.

Perhaps that is the point in the end. God is a creative and imaginative being. To attempt to understand him in a purely rational way is to ignore part of who God is. Lewis felt the frustration and limitation of the rational arguments for faith. Therefore, he left off writing theological essays for a while to start writing fairy stories. What he produced in this phase of his writing is a rich group of stories, which continue to be mined by today's Christian thinkers for the gold of theological insight that is hidden in the prose of Narnia. ✂

Rebekah Mitchell is currently enrolled in her final year of the M.Div. program at Knox College, where she serves as President of the Mission and Theological Society.





LETTER FROM AWAY

# Something extra in Nepal

Walking among the lepers,  
the disabled and the Maoists

BY RICHARD SCHWARZ

**T**HE CIVIL WAR has been more active than ever this year, with 12,000 killed since the beginning of the war. Some very good recent news is that the Maoists have just called a three month ceasefire, which could translate to safer access in remote areas and no road closures. However, the army has not reciprocated, which may force the Maoists to cancel it. The political parties seem ready to fill the void in fighting by increasing agitation; they may start calling general strikes as they have in the past. They seem to be heading for a showdown with the king, as they are demanding a republic, that is, no monarchy at all, and a very radical call in today's situation.

The Maoists also continue their mass kidnappings of 1,000 to 2,000 students and teachers a week for forced education. We have heard disturbing news that the police are again grilling church leaders in Kathmandu and recently in Pokhara on where they are getting their money, how they spend it, how much they pay people to convert; the same silly questions they used to ask in the 1980s. The king may be pursuing a policy of aggressive Hinduism as a way to drum up support, as he is not getting a lot of support in other areas. Please pray for the church as it faces an unpleasant road ahead.

Things have been very busy in Green Pasture Hospital in Pokhara where we work. Ling and I have been here since 1995 with the church. I am a reconstructive surgeon, correcting deformities of leprosy and other disabled people. Ling is a general practitioner and helps poor women start small businesses. The hospital has been over capacity for months now, with many patients coming in from all over Nepal. It is tremendously rewarding to work here, seeing young folk who have never walked before rising up and walking and useless hands being made to work again. Watching a teenager walk for the first time is a wonderful sight as the joy lights up their face. Assistance from Canadians through Presbyterians Sharing and Something Extra keeps our poor fund running so that we are able to give care to the really poor.

Our son Jono, 12, has had a difficult time settling in Kathmandu. His best friend has left, his hostel is closed and he is now about the only kid in the school not living with his parents. We are praying that this transitional phase will not last too long and we will have God given wisdom to support him through this maturing process. He accidentally rode into the middle of a riot this week on the way home from school, which he thought was "kind of cool." Daniel, 10, has somehow adjusted to hav-





ing no boys his age and is, let's say, tolerating hanging out with girls. Christina, 6, is very happy to be back and is busily planning her birthday party.

Our thanks goes out to all the Presbyterians who regularly pray for us and support both us and our patients through their generous giving. 🙏

Richard Schwarz is a missionary in Nepal. This is excerpted from his September newsletter.

### You know you're a missionary when:

You can't answer the question, "Where are you from?"

You have a passport, but no driver's licence.

You watch National Geographic specials and recognize someone.

You watch nature documentaries and think about how good that would be if it were fried.

You sort your friends by continent.



## Helping the lame walk

RAJ KUMAR, 21, was dragging himself on his hands and backside through the Pokhara campus one day, as he had every day of his life. He had been born with bilateral severe club feet with some muscle weakness and had never been able to walk. On this day he happened to cross paths with a community rehabilitation worker from another city, who immediately recognized the potential in this young man and brought him down to us. I fused his feet in a corrected position some months ago and he is just up this last week walking with crutches. He would vote for this being even better than sliced bread. This episode did point out to us our need to publicize our services more widely, for if an educated young man in our own city didn't know of the help we could offer him, what of all those out in the villages? As such our relationships with community groups and churches as well as our outreach camps are so important to our overall impact here.

Our patients are overwhelmed by the love and prayers of of staff and friends at Green Pastures. While here they have heard of the Lord who made the lame to walk, and have come to know this Healer in their own experience and hearts.





# BREATHING *the* SPIRIT *of* LIFE

175 years at the headquarters of Presbyterianism

BY BRIAN STEWART

**T**HE HISTORIC CHURCH of St. Andrew's, Toronto, was born of a congregation that came together in the blustery March of 1830 when Queen Victoria was about to be crowned, so beginning her great era.

We need to dismiss any notion, as we look back on the faded lithographs and photos of Presbyterian ancestors, that they were the stuffy and rigid souls so often lampooned. They were anything but colourless. St. Andrew's was founded by that hardy band of Scots that made up the muscular wave of Scottish immigration that recent historians now assure us "changed the world." Largely Lowland Scots from the Presbyterian heartland, the famed land of the Kirk which had given followers the world's most advanced public education system; they brought to North America a striking sense of individual rights and religious freedom as well as an open approach to discussion and debate remarkable for the time.

St. Andrew's came together out of devotion to the mother church, the Church of Scotland. But it was also progressive in many ways. Other congregations were shocked when, in 1852, St. Andrew's established a choir, a newfangled musical wave that appalled the older Kirks. Soon after, St. Andrew's was dragged before the Synod and warned of excesses when it

dared to become the first Presbyterian church in Canada to acquire an organ. The organ stayed and the choir continues joyfully on to this day.

From the beginning, members were anxious to mix religious contemplation with active social work. In the rutted and ramshackle Victorian Toronto of the time, St. Andrew's was keenly aware of the high levels of poverty and suffering and earliest records show widows and local poor being cared for. A Stranger's Friend Society was established to run soup kitchens and gather collections for the destitute. Women were in the forefront of organizing relief and from the 1840s on ran a spreading network of community services. Years before the Ethiopian famine and Live Aid efforts of the 1980s, St. Andrew's mobilized a Famine Relief Drive for India in 1851.

St. Andrew's was also recognized for its intellectual curiosity. It was the lead Presbyterian congregation in the establishment of Queen's University and its famed Philosophy department, which so influenced Protestant thought in the latter 19th century.

Such innovations helped make St. Andrew's so popular that pews were soon overflowing. There was no option but to move and grow larger. So in 1876 the congregation raised \$100,000





**Pre-assembly congress of the Continuing Presbyterian Church, St. Andrew's, June 1925.**

to build the current majestic church at King and Simcoe Streets, smack in the busiest heart of the downtown. Renowned architect W.G. Storm used Georgetown stone to create the Norman Scottish or Romanesque style of the exterior. Inside, the works of curved wood and granite pillars made St. Andrew's an instant sensation.

Socially, St. Andrew's had become a curious institution, known both as the pinnacle of Toronto's Scottish society and for its devoted work among the poor. Historian Charlotte Gray has noted St. Andrew's "was best known for its preachers and its good works" and in the 1870s this combination was to produce a remarkable epoch in its history. The arrival of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell brought a dynamo at a time of tumultuous change in Presbyterianism and the wider church—the period after Darwin, the arrival of the Age of Modernism and new debates over the church's role in society. Macdonnell was quickly to become one of the most famed churchmen in Canada, according to Gray, "a fiery orator with burning eyes and an unquenchable ambition to improve the world. Macdonnell filled the pews of St. Andrew's three times each Sunday—not only because, in his rasping Scottish burr, he preached such powerful sermons, but also because he generated controversy."

In an age when the press eagerly covered the sermons of leading ministers, Macdonnell in 1875 caused a theological scandal that was the sensation of all Ontario. After a sermon in which he cast doubt on the "doctrine of eternal punishment" the minister was hauled before a heresy trial at General Assembly. The case caused a near schism within the church at the very time the church union movement was struggling to bring together the various streams of Presbyterianism in Canada. Despite a media firestorm, the congregation rallied solidly behind their young minister. Macdonnell not only survived, but quickly established St. Andrew's as a centre in the fight for religious tolerance in Canada.

What most made St. Andrew's stand out, however, was an intense involvement in new social work, a drive that would make the church a leader in the coming Social Gospel movement in Canada. This downtown church was a witness to some of the worst conditions of squalor and disease in North America. Toronto slums near the railway yards held thousands in a state of poverty almost unimaginable today. It was a Dickensian world of tarpaper shacks and tenements where child prostitution was rampant, and sweat shop exploitation of women and barefoot children commonplace. A royal commission in 1886 noted illiterate children as young as 10 worked 64-hour weeks in unventilated factories for as little as \$1.50 a week.

Mobilized by Rev. Macdonnell, St. Andrew's moved forcefully to establish literacy classes for working children, assistance for distressed mothers, church schools and visits to the sick and dying. The historic Penny Savings bank was opened to help the working poor save money (the government later expanded this bank into a nationwide institution).

Even in our time, when the concept of outreach is so accepted, St. Andrew's record of social work in the 1880s and 1890s makes astonishing reading. It founded the famous Nelson Street Institute just two blocks north of the church, which would soon become a model for other churches across Canada. There it operated night schools, a mother's meeting association, boys and girls' clubs, gymnasium, sewing and cooking classes. A holiday house was opened on Lake Simcoe to give needy downtown children a chance to escape the heat and pollution of Toronto summers. Teams of formidable St. Andrew's women started dropping into the overcrowded tenement houses to offer immediate help to immigrants and urban poor.

This new era of Social Gospel in Victorian times proclaimed the often-controversial message that the church must pursue Christ's work within the world. The works of St. Andrew's deeply inspired a frequent visitor, future Prime Minister



Mackenzie King, whose famous mother, Isabel, was one of the church's most vigorous social workers. Later, when the Nelson Street Institute became the St. Andrew's Institute (1912) at the site of the current Church Hall, King was on hand to proclaim his own dedication to such efforts, a commitment that would later have profound effect on Canadian social reform. King used St. Andrew's as his example when he insisted, "The church would have no place but the world in which it finds itself, it is but one institution, but... its mission is to breathe upon the others the spirit of life."

What is ironic now is that Presbyterians have allowed much of this remarkable past to be forgotten. Indeed, with habitual self-deprecation, they have allowed an absurd version to take hold of an uptight Church of joyless and gloom addicted elites resistant to all change. In fact, St. Andrew's was also in the forefront of progressive theology. To quote from a non-Presbyterian, Canadian historian Ramsey Cook, "by the 1890's theological liberalism had made a noticeable impact on Protestant thinking in English Canada. Nowhere was that impact more obvious than in the Presbyterian Church."

The strain of operating downtown took its toll. In 1896 Reverend Macdonnell died prematurely at age 53, worn down by a quarter century of exhausting ministry. The church often wearied of the depressing surroundings and constant struggles to help impoverished neighbours. Yet over coming decades it would reject repeated proposals to leave the grit behind for greener, more prosperous areas of Toronto.

At times morale was badly shaken, never more so than during the appalling tragedy of the First World War. Church members of the 48th Highlanders—associated with St. Andrew's since its founding—were among the first to march off to the trenches in 1914. By 1918 fully a quarter of the congregation, 137, were off serving, including six St. Andrew's women who were nurses in France. Of the terrible cost, we read in the church history "the young life of St. Andrew's was drained increasingly year by year in the marshes of Flanders" and by war's end 19 young men of the congregation had been killed, including two in one day on August 17, 1918.

After such losses, the beginning of the '20s seemed to some in the congregation a sad period of drift and demoralization. Then, quite dramatically, in 1924 St. Andrew's found a place in history as Canada watched the great Church Union Debate. This was the move to unite Presbyterians, Methodists and the Congregational Church in one body as today's United Church. This movement, pressed by unionist advocates for a

decade, met strong resistance within St. Andrew's, which began to lead a chorus of angry congregations who complained they were being unfairly and undemocratically dragged into Union. Though General Assembly was ready to opt for Union, many individual churches were not; and St. Andrew's voted 94 per cent against. The battle was joined as another remarkable St. Andrew's minister, Stuart Parker rose to deplore "the rending of a great church." Furthermore, he thundered, there will not be one united church "for we Presbyterians stand apart." Across Canada, Presbyterian congregations rallied to this stand and St. Andrew's quickly became recognized as the headquarters of Presbyterianism. In June 1925 national delegates descended on Toronto and in unique

sessions, which overflowed St. Andrew's and spilled out onto the surrounding grounds, a continuing Presbyterian church was proclaimed and duly organized.

Revived by a renewed sense of mission the church carried on its downtown ministry, through the Second World War, the 50s and 60s, when suburbia pulled so many in

the congregation away and financial problems multiplied.

By the early 1970s the management committee and Rev. Douglas Stewart (full disclosure: my late uncle) developed an ambitious renovation plan, which began major church improvements. The discovery of Air Rights in this forest of skyscrapers brought 11th hour financial relief. Two remarkable bequests: the Ely Estate and the Heritage Trust, became a lifeline that still continues.

By the 1990s, years of concern over survival gave way to an extraordinary period of enthusiasm and growth—now spearheaded by Rev. Dr. Cameron Brett, an orator of considerable power, learned theologian and a leader thoroughly committed to St. Andrew's strategic vocation: "The people of St. Andrew's are called by God to serve in faith, hope and love in the core or Toronto." Of many new programs launched the involvement in Out of the Cold has been both the most demanding, and most rewarding. Here too the link with St. Andrew's past is made vivid.

When the congregation recently celebrated its 175th anniversary—including 130 years at the same site—it did so with a deep sense of gratitude to those distant ancestors, who were able to found not only a church, but a sense of mission that still resonates so strongly within St. Andrew's today. ✠



BRIAN STEWART

*It was a Dickensian world of tarpaper shacks and tenements where child prostitution was rampant, and sweat shop exploitation of women and barefoot children commonplace.*

This is an excerpt from a talk journalist Brian Stewart gave at the 175th anniversary celebration dinner at St. Andrew's in May. Brian Stewart's entire talk is available on line in MP3 audio format on the church website at [www.standrewstoronto.org](http://www.standrewstoronto.org).

# Fool for the King

*To those who aren't saved, a lot of what we do looks foolish*

BY MARLY CAIL

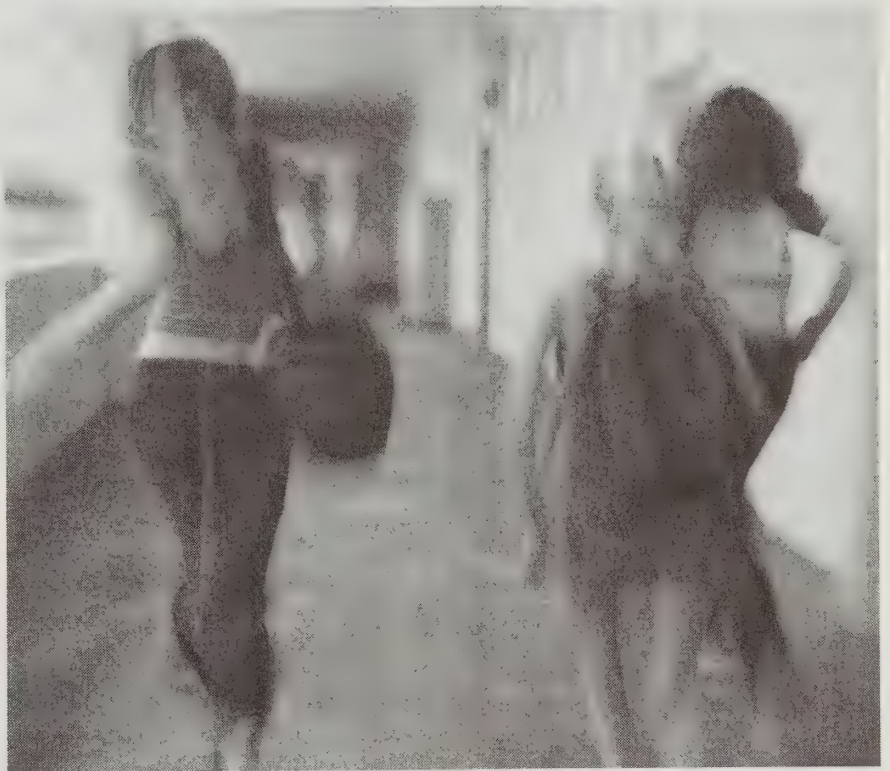
*For the message of the cross is foolish to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

1 Corinthians 1:18

**I**n my first year of university, I was really taken up by all that was happening around me. Luckily, having been a counsellor at Circle Square Ranch for a summer, I was able to straighten myself before I got into anything that I would have regretted. In my second year at university, I started teaching Sunday school in a town about an hour's drive from my university. This took a lot of my time on Sundays. I would leave at about 7:30 and get back well after noon. This kept me in on Saturday nights as well because I needed to be well rested for the following morning. My friends would bug me about this. One even said, "You spent the summer with God, the school year is for you." I tried to laugh it off, and said something back to him about how if I put in the effort throughout the year, then God would reward the "Please God, let me pass this exam" prayers come finals.

In my third year of university, I moved out of residence and into a house with five other people. Getting away from residence life and all that it brought was good for me. I started teaching Sunday School in town and got more involved with the local church. I started attending an Athletes in Action Bible study at a friend's house, which I really enjoyed. My roommates were cool with me going to church, but when they found out that I was going to Bible study, to actually learn about the Bible, they started teasing me. They didn't really understand what I was doing learning about the Bible on a Thursday night.

As the semester progressed, I felt



**I would try to hide my Bible so no one knew what I was carrying**

myself being called to do more in my church. I realized we needed a Bible study. I decided to host a ladies' Bible study group in my house. When I told my roommates, I really felt foolish. And of course, they teased me. But eventually, they warmed up to the idea. None of them actually came to it, but they did start asking questions. Maybe the whole time I was being called for my roommates and not for my church.

It's funny now, to look back on those things, and realize how embarrassed I was. Going to church or to Bible study, I would try to hide my Bible so no one knew what I was carrying. I was terrified that someone would point to me and laugh: "there

goes little church girl with her Bible to her churchy things." I'm not sure what this year is going to bring. I know there is something else that will come up and make me feel foolish. To those who aren't saved, a lot of what we do looks foolish. But this time, I am going to hold my head up, not hide my Bible, and proudly tell my friends where I am going and what I am doing. Who knows? Maybe their questions will turn into them coming to church with me, and hopefully, someday, I'll help them become fools for the King. ✂

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Marly Cail is going into her fourth year as a biology major at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B.



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# The most reluctant convert

*C.S. Lewis was something glorious: a mere Christian*

C live Staples Lewis was a lecturer at both Oxford and Cambridge University and considered one of the finest minds of his generation. But it is Lewis the Christian who changed the world. His genius was the ability to convey highly complex ideas in a straightforward and understandable manner. Like some grand champion of common sense he sliced away at cluttered thinking and double-talk.

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils," he wrote. "One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

Lewis declared himself a Christian in 1929, "perhaps the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." It was as though he had tried to avoid the inevitable, considering every argument against Christianity, forcing himself to take on all of the objections his fertile mind could produce. Each one he overcame.

From this point on everything he wrote was informed and enlivened by his Christianity. But Lewis was too subtle to knock people over the head with his faith. He knew that talking was far more effective than shouting.

In 1952, Lewis's *Mere Christianity* appeared. The title reflected the author's attempt to remove Christianity away from those who would adapt it, dilute it and change what is pure and perfect. Again, he did not pepper his prose with quotes from the scriptures because he knew that this would have a limited effect with the majority of his readers. What he did do was to show

that a belief in God was logical. He reversed the equation offered by the secular world, that it is the thoughtless who become Christians, the thoughtful who reject it. Simply, he summed up the arguments like an angel:

There is no need to be worried by facetious people who try to make the Christian hope of Heaven ridiculous by saying they do not want to spend eternity playing harps. The answer to such people is that if they cannot understand books written for grown-ups, they should not talk about them. All the scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.) is, of course, a merely symbolical attempt to express the inexpressible. People who take these symbols literally might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to lay eggs.

In the 1950s, Lewis met and fell in love with Joy Davidman, an American convert from Judaism. The marriage was beautiful but brief and Joy died in 1960. The movie *Shadowlands* chronicled some of the magnificence of the relationship but managed to expunge most of the Christianity from the story. What brought them together, what sustained them during the agony of cancer and what saved Lewis after the loss was a profound Christian belief.

After Joy's death Lewis wrote a short book entitled *A Grief Observed*, an exploration of his own feelings following his wife's death. "Grief still feels like fear," he said. "Up till this time I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time. Almost pure time, empty successiveness." He told friends he could no longer remember Joy's face. Until it came to him that she was there all along, just waiting. Her face shone



**Lewis was too subtle to knock people over the head with his faith. He knew that talking was far more effective than shouting**

again in his mind and God's love and certainty overwhelmed his pain.

Though his remaining years were never as happy as those spent with Joy he wrote and lectured, becoming a famous man in Europe, as well as North America. He died in 1963, on the same day as J.F. Kennedy. Quite the juxtaposition. Kennedy was a mere President; Lewis was much greater—a mere Christian.

Legions of the uninitiated will now be exposed to his work and ideas and that is a glorious thing for anybody who cares about Christ and His church. ✠

Michael Coren's *Life of CS Lewis* is published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside. His website is [www.michaelcoren.com](http://www.michaelcoren.com).



# Remembrance of Christmases past

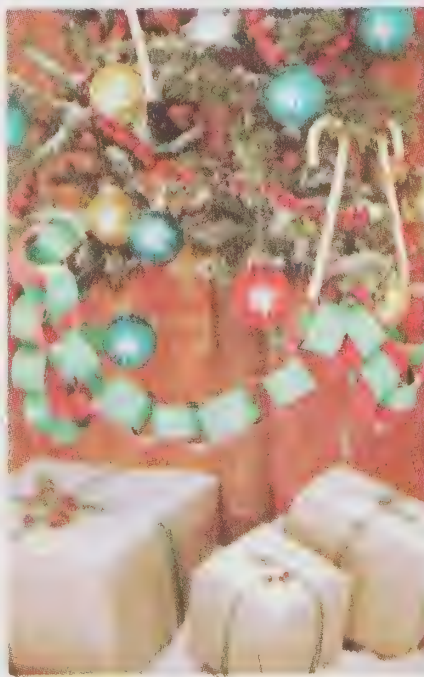
*Chocolates, turkey, oranges and a special gift*

**T**he older I get the more I'm convinced that memory and smell are linked. I love the smell of Christmas: Sugar cookies baking. The turkey sizzling. I love the taste of Christmas too: Mixed nuts. Mandarin oranges. Fresh dirt from one of my brother Tim's incoming snowballs. Ah, Christmastime.

When I was a child of eight or nine and Christmas was barely a week away, I sinned greatly. I sneaked into Grandpa's room, listened to him snore, then reached out and stole an entire box of chocolates, locking myself in the bathroom and eating both layers. I can still taste those chocolates. I can still feel that strap. Few spankings were worth it. This was one. It made me wonder if sometimes you're almost better off asking for forgiveness than permission.

Each December morning my sister and I would sit on a living room heat register inches from the Christmas tree coveting toys from the Sears' catalogue. On the wall behind our heads, frost framed an electrical outlet. Yesterday I'd earned a nickel putting my tongue on it. But otherwise I was a reasonably bright chap. My sister pointed out certain toys. "What do they do?" she asked. If I didn't know the answer, I made one up. One page in particular held a dream for me. At the top right, just above a stuffed bear, sat a yellow-handled bow with real suction-cup arrows. "If only I could pull the wrapping off one of those," I told my sister, "my Christmas would be complete." She shook her head. When I told my brother, he said, "You kidding? After what you did to Grandpa's chocolates? You'll be lucky to get a hand-me-down toothbrush."

Deep down I knew he was right. Deep down I dreaded Christmas. But still I shared the dream with my dad. "\$10.99!" he winced, "You want to put us in the



Poor House?" I wondered what the Poor House was like. What would we do there? Would Grandpa still come visit? Would he bring chocolates?

As December 25 drew near, I scanned the growing pile beneath the tree. Nothing. A shiny green package near the back was the right size, but late one night while everyone else slept, a flashlight informed me that the nametag was my sister's. In fact, most of them seemed to be hers. I squeezed the ones that said "Philip." They felt like practical gifts: socks, deodorant, underwear. Things you don't tell your friends about on Boxing Day.

The worst thing about Christmas morning was the waiting. My parents made us eat breakfast first. Then do the dishes. And sweep the floor. And vacuum. And memorize the Gospel of Luke. Then Dad prayed for the troops in Vietnam and Korea and Russia, and missionaries in countries I couldn't pronounce.

At last the time came. And this year the disappointment was overwhelming. With only three presents left beneath the tree, I held in my lap a small Tonka truck, three pairs of black socks, a shirt with pins in it and a cowboy poster that read, "When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on."

The first remaining gift was a George Beverley Shea album for my mom. The second was for Grandpa, a box of chocolates from my brother and me. The last gift was green and shiny and just the right size. My sister grinned. And picked it up. Then the most unexpected thing happened: she turned and handed it to me. "Open it," she said. "It's yours. Tim put my name on it to fool you."

Mom wanted me to save the wrapping paper for next year, but it was already too late. I let out a triumphant Whoop! and danced around the living room, holding the bow and arrow high like the Stanley Cup. Grandpa stopped sampling chocolates and smiled widely. "It's from all of us," he said.

"You be careful with that, Son," said my mother.

"He'll be okay," said my dad.

I couldn't wait to try the gift out. I remember wolfing down turkey and my Mom's special dressing and pudding so thick you could hear it hit bottom. And I recall tip-toeing after my brother as he headed down the hallway that afternoon. I locked an arrow in place, took careful aim and pulled on the string until it was tight.

"Hey Tim!" I yelled. "Merry Christmas!"

And I wondered just for a moment if I should ask permission or forgiveness. ☮

Phil Callaway is the author of 15 books including his new novel *Growing Up on the Edge of the World* (Harvest House). His website is [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

# Teddies and tragedies

*Cuddly bears just what the doctor ordered*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



De Silva said there is little cost to the knitters themselves, as most of the materials are donated. She said the only real expense is mailing the bears to Liz McCrindle of Puslinch, Ont., who coordinates how they will be distributed. McCrindle brought the pattern for the bears from Scotland. She hosts an annual teddy tea party where knitters are welcomed into her home to drop off their bears and

**T**eddy bears always manage to bring a smile to a child's face. Imagine how much bigger that smile must be when the bear is given to a child in need. Teddies for Tragedies sends knitted and crocheted teddy bears overseas to children in hospitals, orphanages and poor communities. The women at Westminster, Pierrefonds, Que., have been supporting the project for about two years, and just sent 300 bears away for distribution. "I look at these bears and I think, 'what a small thing and yet, what a big thing in a child's life,'" said Mary Lou De Silva, secretary at Westminster and part of the women's group that knits the bears. "Is this not what Christianity is all about?"

Teddies for Tragedies was originally started in Britain. The first batch went to Sudan in 1985, where a temporary orphanage was established in a refugee

camp for 2,000 children with tuberculosis. Since then, teddies have been sent to Mexico, Lebanon, Romania, Costa Rica and Brazil, to name just a few places. More than 400 volunteers knit bears in Canada, the United States, Australia and Europe.

Doctors working in developing countries have said the bears are just as important to healing as the medical treatment children receive. De Silva is encouraged by such stories. "It's heartening to hear where the bears go and how well they're received," she said. "I heard a story where children were getting injections and they cried, until they got a bear."

The 15 to 20 women in the "work party" at Westminster meet every Wednesday to have tea, knit bears, enjoy fellowship and pray for the safe arrival of the bears to wherever they are most needed.

meet other volunteers. Last year, 70 women showed up, which is why Duff's, Puslinch, hosted this year's October event. McCrindle collected 5,000 bears from across Canada in 2004. "Ladies come with garbage bagfuls of bears they've knitted all year!" she said. "It's really snowballed."

The program has recently partnered with Samaritan's Purse, which encourages the teddies to go into boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Several other charities help McCrindle distribute the bears around the globe.

Volunteers who are unable to knit, crochet or sew, can help by donating wool, stuffing or material. And there is always a need for willing travellers to can take bears with them. *SA*

To make your own bear, please visit our website and link to this article.



# Joie de vivre and bon vivant

*John Hoag was a distinguished architect and served the church passionately*

BY JOHN MORDEN

John Hoag and I were fellow members of Rosedale, Toronto, for 40 years. It was customary for John and Sarah and their two children, Hannah and Matthew, to sit in the pew immediately behind the one in which my family sat. This positioned me to hear his periodic insightful commentaries on what was taking place during the service—uttered sotto voce—sounding very similar to the hushed tones one hears from some television commentators during golf tournaments.

John was born in 1930 in Brantford and died, sadly and unexpectedly, on September 11, 2005 in Bracebridge. The memorial service was held at Rosedale a few days later with standing-room-only attendance. John was an outstanding architect. Having attended the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto, he practised his profession in London, Boston and then New York City until 1966 when he returned to Canada. When in New York he was a member of the Mendelssohn Men's Choir. Following his return to Canada, he joined the staff at the University of Waterloo to run its co-operative program, a position he held for 25 years until his retirement.

John served on the Rosedale Board of Managers for many years and, also, was



Two paintings by John Hoag, both from France.

Chair for 26 years of the committee on church architecture for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which won a Premier's Award for Accessibility in 1986 for its handbook of standards and accessibility guidelines for church architecture. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, an honorary member of the Ontario Association of Architects, and was given the Order of da Vinci by the OAA in 1987 for his outstanding contribution to his profession.

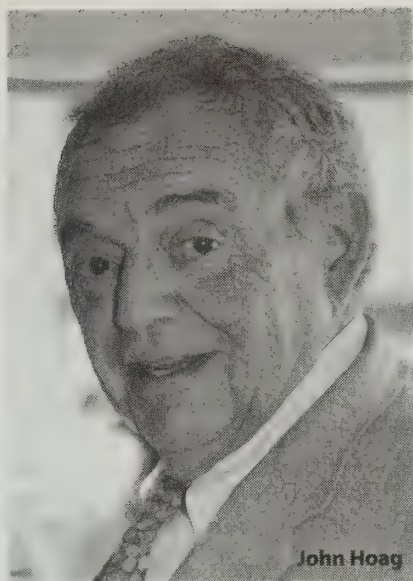
John had a great passion for France. He travelled there many times and painted many canvasses of French scenes, some of which were displayed at Rosedale's Fall Festivals. My connection with John was as a friend with whom I enjoyed exchanging views and reactions on a continuing basis. In the fall of 2001, John, on behalf of the Knox College Former Residence Association, invited me to speak at its annual dinner at Knox College. I asked him what I should talk about. With a mischievous grin, he

replied, gruffly, and also ambiguously, "You're supposed to be funny."

That was all I got from him. In his introduction before my remarks he described me "just like the guy next door." I realized that he was setting me up for some kind of a response and so in my opening I referred to what he had said and then remarked that after the audience had heard my address I could appreciate their saying to themselves: "We wish this guy had stayed next door."

I have pleasant memories of recently serving with John on the congregation's last ministerial search committee which, after it had done its work, recommended the call of our present minister William ("Bill") C. MacLellan, much to the enthusiastic response of all concerned—which, I may say, has continued unabated to the present. John made wise contributions throughout the search committee's deliberations but the event that sticks most in my mind was a three-hour train trip out of Toron-





John Hoag

to on a Saturday evening to hear a potential candidate preach the next morning. Two distinguished women members of the committee accompanied John and me. John saw to it that we travelled in style—first-class Via. He arrived at Union Station with a freshly packed hamper of gourmet food prepared by his favourite restaurant. During our journey, while we were thinking of getting into the hamper, John, with his eyes twinkling even more than they usually did, produced from another source a bottle of Scotland's eau de vie for our pleasure. I had, for more than one reason, some doubts about whether it was appropriate to take up his offer, but the nice steward said that it would be all right. Of course, there was some justifiable logic in it by reason of the connection between the eau de vie and Scotland and, then, The Presbyterian Church in Canada's roots in the Church of Scotland. There was, therefore, a loose connection between what John was proposing and our church. I think it likely that John had the same rationale, or something like it, in mind.

A description of John that was repeated several times during his memorial service was that he was "a raconteur and a bon vivant." He was also a warm-hearted and stimulating friend. We will all miss him very much. ☸

John W. Morden is a retired judge and member of Rosedale, Toronto.

# Claiming the crown

*D'Arcy Lade never did anything half-heartedly*

BY MARION BARCLAY MACKAY

**C**ommitted... passionate... strong-minded... compassionate listener... sense of humour... pastor... friend... family man... faithful servant of Jesus Christ. These are just a few of the words that come swiftly to mind as I remember a friend and colleague, Rev. D'Arcy William Lade, who passed away from cancer on Sept. 28. He had been working to establish a Presbyterian presence and ministry in the Comox Valley of Vancouver Island for the past decade. He was previously at St. Andrew's, Lethbridge, Alta.

D'Arcy never did anything half-heartedly. I learned that first-hand as I worked with him for five years in team ministry at St. Andrew's. He was dedicated to his calling as a preacher and worked hard at finding ways to connect the gospel with contemporary life. His pastoral presence touched many lives, and brought tremendous compassion and comfort to complex pastoral situations in the lives of his flock as he so frequently referred to his congregation. He was willing to try new things and often got frustrated with the slowness of change around him. D'Arcy liked a challenge and each congregation where he ministered, Forbes, Grande Prairie, Alta., St. Andrew's and the new church in Comox Valley, provided him with the challenges he needed in his ministry. He was also involved in various aspects of community life in Grande Prairie, developing strong ecumenical relationships in Lethbridge and networking in the Comox Valley. He was a faithful presbyter, usually travelling significant distances to attend presbytery meetings and other associated

responsibilities. In Alberta winter weather, his faithfulness and dedication were exemplary.

More than a colleague, D'Arcy had a joy for life and a gift of friendship. He was happiest when he could spend time with his family: his wife Marion of 35 years, and their children Adam, Alexis, Nick and Ben. As a family they were an integral part of each congregation where D'Arcy served. In Lethbridge, renewal for D'Arcy often meant donning his blue jeans and cowboy boots to head off to the farm of a parishioner to give a hand, or investing some time and energy with an engine, whether it be car, truck, or boat.

In May of this year I received a call from D'Arcy to tell me that he had been diagnosed with cancer and that all he wanted now was to make the best of the time he had left. D'Arcy did that in true D'Arcy style. The last few months of his life were precious—treasured times with his family, time to read and reflect, and time to receive the support, encouragement and care from those who had known him throughout the years and whose lives he had touched.

D'Arcy had picked the closing hymn for his remembrance service, and had instructed all that it be sung with gusto. The hymn was: And Can It Be That I Should Gain. No voice had more gusto than D'Arcy's: "Bold I approach th' eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own." ☸



D'Arcy Lade

Marion Barclay will be working as a missionary in Ghana starting in the New Year.



# Rich in history and anecdote

*The roots and heritage of Kingston's Presbyterian cathedral*

BY A. DONALD MACLEOD

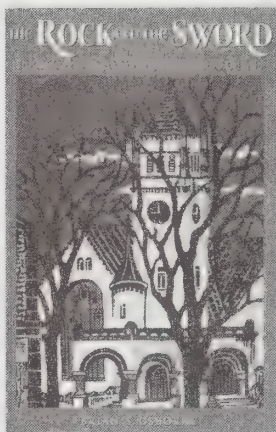
## **The Rock and the Sword: A History of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kingston, Ontario.**

Brian S. Osborne

*Heinrich Heine Press at Grass Creek.*

This volume by Professor Brian Osborne of Queen's University joins an increasing number of impressive congregational histories. From Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal and now Kingston we are privileged as Canadian Presbyterians to have significant contributions to help churches understand their roots and heritage. Though a geographer, Osborne has, at the request of St. Andrew's Kingston War Veterans Association, benefited all of us with the fruits of 15 years of research and study into the history of the so-called Presbyterian cathedral of eastern Ontario, rich in history and anecdote. The volume, thanks to desktop publishing, has been beautifully produced. The illustrations and photographs make the book essential reading not only for those who wish to understand St. Andrew's but also the history of both Kingston and Queen's University. Those involved in its production are to be congratulated. The only thing that one misses is an index (and the odd footnote.)

As far as the content is concerned the size of the book is somewhat overwhelming at first glance. The early chapters, detailing at length some of the struggles of Presbyterianism in Upper Canada, go over familiar territory. As the book progresses into the post-Union period one would like to know more. The folk of St. Andrew's, in common with other similar congregations, could



be a scrappy lot. In the mid-1880s no less than three ministers chosen by the congregation declined calls because of anonymous letters of warning as to what they would face should they come to Kingston. Conflict seems to have punctuated

the history of St. Andrew's on significant occasions. In keeping with Edwin Friedman's analysis of the family process in church and synagogue, certain patterns of dominant behaviour appear to prevail across the years and generations. One of the more significant ministries at St. Andrew's was that of John W. Stephen, who served happily from 1916 to 1939 and was largely responsible for keeping the congregation Presbyterian in 1925. Osborne was privileged to have personal interviews with the family, as well as access to Stephen family papers. Stephen was followed by Forbes Wedderburn who served for 17 years, another period of stability. With the coming of Max Putnam, described as charismatic (small c, one assumes) the congregation took a leap forward in membership, attendance and children's and youth activities. Reaching a peak of over a thousand members and adherents in 1970, the congregation has faced steady erosion since that time.

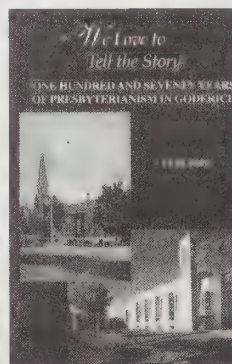
Osborne deals with the causes in a way that would help other churches face the realities of decline. St. Andrew's is not alone in its struggles. One could have wished for more insights into the theology and mission of the congregation, especially to the university community. Only in the 1980s do theological issues surface in the book. Some of that presentation seems one sided and dependent on unhappy people. It is hard to be honest in congregational histories but Osborne, as an outsider, generally seeks to preserve objectivity and be even-handed.

Altogether this is a most absorbing and helpful book and for any who are intrigued by the dynamics of parish life and the history of an important PCC congregation, the read is engrossing. It is also a book that would help anyone wrestling with issues of continuity and survival to re-examine their own church's life and witness. ☺

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Rev. A. Donald MacLeod's latest book is *W. Stanford Reid, An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy.*

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Many congregations produce histories to celebrate their anniversaries. Few are as expansive as those mentioned above. Still, they capture the life, work and commitment of local institutions. One such is *We Love to Tell the Story: 170 years of Presbyterianism in Goderich.* Connect to this page on our

website to read an article from the *Goderich Signal-Star* about the church and its story.

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## obituaries

**BARTLET, James Nobel**, was born on December 13, 1925 in Windsor, Ont., and passed away there suddenly on September 17, 2005. He was a lifetime member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Windsor, and a longstanding trustee of the congregation. Jim was the legal counsel of the trustees, Kirk Session and the congregation of St. Andrew's. Jim Bartlet's great-grandfather, Alexander Bartlet of Fargue, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, was the first Clerk of Session of St. Andrew's, Windsor, when it was established in 1857. The Bartlet family has continued their support and involvement in church affairs over the four succeeding generations.

**HUNTER, Mabel Annie**, aged 91, elder and longtime member of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, Ont. Passed away July 18, 2005.

**MOORE, John (Jack) Lawrence**, passed away on October 17, 2005. An Elder emeritus of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, Ont. and former Chairman of the Board of Managers. For many years Jack actively served the church and community. An inspiration to all who knew him and who will be sorely missed by family and friends.

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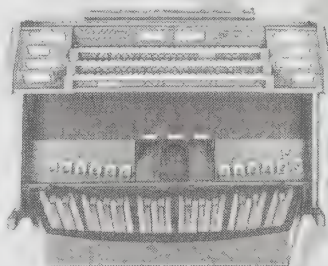
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# Mesmerized, spellbound, enthralled

*When the Messiah comes the only appropriate response is to be blown away by Him*

BY DAVID WEBBER



“Linda, will ya look at what that fool fossil from the Jurassic period is trying to do now. That bird thinks he is a delicate flying dove instead of a lumbering Pterodactyl.” I was standing at our living room window pointing with disbelief.

“Yikes!” said Linda. “It looks like old Gronk has really lost it this time. I thought he was showing the early signs of senility when he stayed so long past the usual departure date for his winter holiday. It’s the beginning of Advent and here he is trying to perch on the very top of our largest snow laden spruce tree like he is a robin.”

We had no need for binoculars to watch the spectacle. Gronk is a huge Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) who has been limbering around and over our lakefront home like some prehistoric

creature since the time we moved here 15 years ago. We call him Gronk because that’s the sound he makes, his “bird song” you might say. Gronk is quite a bit larger than the norm for this species, which makes him even more awkward in all things, especially the finer elements of flight. Whenever I see him attempting to fly over our house I get extremely nervous. Once when he was attempting to do a fly over he surprised a flock of starlings that were feeding on the lawn on the hill in front of our house. Scared half to death, about 50 starlings flew straight up into Gronk’s flight path, which by this time was fully committed to the top of our house. Gronk was shocked with all the starling flack, lost his concentration and headed for our picture window. I am not sure if Gronk jettisoned all that was in

him out of pure fright or as a deliberate flight maneuver, but it enabled him to barely scrape his belly over our rooftop whilst whitewashing our window with about five gallons of heron effluent. It was not a pretty picture.

Even when Gronk is landing in the marsh just to the north of us he seems more like a crashing, eight-engine Spruce Goose with a crazy Howard Hughes at the controls than a bird designed for flight. I have never seen any blue heron attempt a landing on anything but marshland before. To see the most awkward one of all time attempting to land in the delicate bendy top of a spruce tree 150 feet tall, well you just have to be there.

“Will you look at that!” exclaimed Linda. “He actually did it.”

And he did too. After three attempts,





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## He seems more like a crashing, eight-engine Spruce Goose with a crazy Howard Hughes at the controls than a bird designed for flight

he somehow clung to the very top of the spruce tree with his great gangly legs, cautiously got his balance and stood up, bending the top of the spruce tree nearly in two. He shook back his two long black head plumes in a James Dean imitation and seemed to stare at us through the picture window with, "There, thought it couldn't be done didn't ya?"

"He looks soooooo out of place on that snowladen spruce tree," I said. "He looks like that great heavy angel contraption we argue about each Christmas when you insist on putting it on the Christmas tree."

Linda smiled and continued studying Gronk in a treetop. Gronk continued to survey his world from atop the spruce tree as though he had done this every day of his life. We had invested heavily in studying the old bird, spent hours watching him and yet he had delightfully surprised us. I was so blown out of the water and awestruck with his latest trick that I ran downstairs to the library to find *Clarke's Bird's of Canada* to check out Gronk's sanity according to Canada's greatest ornithological authority. It turned out, according to the bird bible, in spite of all our personal study and as unusual as it seemed to us, what Gronk was doing was completely to be expected. Great blue herons not only roost in trees, but they nest in them too. Go figure!

Gronk in a treetop, a delightful surprise that enthralled us all. Later in the day when I had stopped shaking my head, I began to think about Gronk's angel on a Christmas tree imitation and I thought about how it was a lot like the first Christmas. When you're really interested in something and then that something surprises you, it just blows you away. And that is the theme that strikes me now as I read the Christmas story. Even though the Gospel writers, especially Matthew, go to great lengths to show that God's Messiah, Jesus, came exactly as it was written about in the authoritative book of the Hebrew Bible; that Emanuel, God With Us, was to come in the line of David, born in a

stable in Bethlehem, Born of a Virgin, even though all this is in the "Book" and the book was well studied by everyone in Jewish society, when it happened everyone was blown away by it. From Temple priest to the shepherd boy and everyone in between including Mary and Joseph, all of them were awestruck with the advent of Messiah.

I have sat in on all kinds of small group Bible studies and heard all kinds of people, perhaps including myself at times, contend, surely if those folks were really reading and studying their Bibles they would have expected Christ to come exactly as he did come, or at the very least, not been so blown out of the water by it. But such arrogance towards the Bible and its characters totally misses the point. The point is that when the Messiah comes, the only appropriate response is to be blown away by it. The only suitable reaction is to be awestruck, mesmerized, spellbound, enthralled and fascinated by it. And it strikes me that this is missing from my celebration of Christ's birth, from my response to his continued coming into my world as well as from my sense of expectation of his full return. If Gronk in a treetop can blow me out of the water, surely I can be just a little bit awestruck with the advent of Christ.

Complacency is a maggot that eats holes through faith responses. It is the maggot that steals away our sense of awe and expectation, that which castrates our response to Christ's Advent. How do we deal with it? Chelsea, my teenage daughter, reminded me the other day about the time I made an Advent apple in church. She said she would never forget it and that it would forever inform her response to Christmas. One first Sunday of Advent I started out by showing a nice red apple to all the kids in church. I asked if anyone would like a piece. Half the kids nodded their heads, sort of. The other half kind of just shrugged their shoulders; they'd sooner have some candy. So I took out my old pocketknife and started to slowly peel the large apple, talking about how juicy

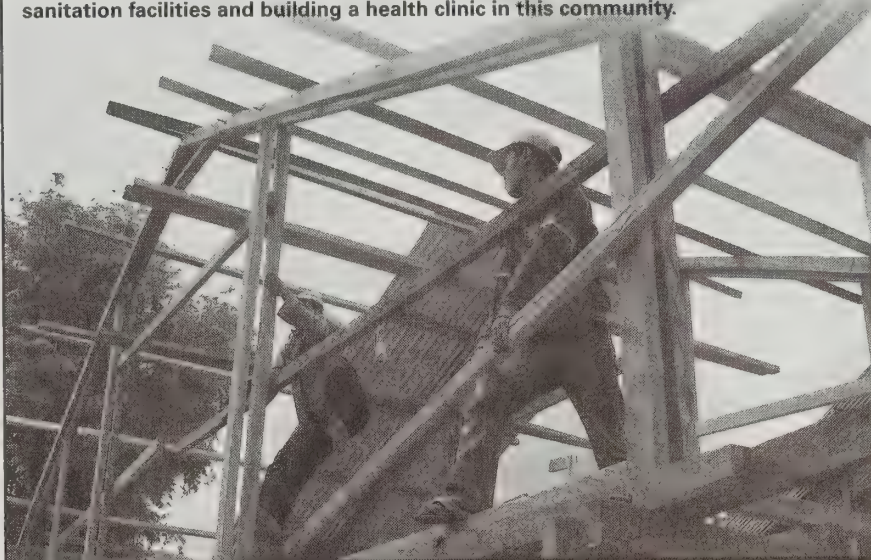
it seemed and letting the juice drip down from my hand and the smell fill the room. All eyes were on the apple. Then I said, "Well this apple needs a little further preparation." So I took out a bag of sugar and slowly poured out a dollop onto a large plate. Then I tasted it with my finger and said, "Still needs more preparation." I then took out a container of cinnamon and added some to the plate and slowly stirred. I tasted it again and said, "Nope, needs more sugar." I slowly added some sugar, sliced a small piece of apple into the sugar-cinnamon mixture and then looked at the kids. Every eye was on that apple. There was no complacency towards that apple, I can tell you. Every kid and adult in the room was ready, Advent apple ready.

You see the very reason the people who showed up for the first Christmas were so wonderstruck and enthralled and blown out of the water by Christ's advent was precisely because they had been spending a lifetime preparing for it and expecting it and looking forward to it. They did so by reading Scripture, talking, wondering when it would happen, what it would be like, and looking forward to it happening. And so, when it happened, these folks were fully stoked.

It is in the act of observing and preparing and actively waiting that wonder and awe are born, and that's what we need more of now in our Christian churches than ever before. The early Christians lived a life that was vibrating around the Lord's return, his second advent. Just read the Epistles and Revelations. It deeply affected how they experienced his coming daily into their lives and celebrated his birth. They expected him to show up whenever two or more gathered in his name. They looked for his presence at each Lord's Table. Can you imagine a Lord's Table like that, a Christian life like that, an Advent and Christmas like that? Well get about your business of actively preparing. Maranatha, the Lord comes! (1Cor.16.22; Rev.22.20) *✠*

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire*.

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# Historical but evolving

*Huron-Perth is a haven in many ways*

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

**T**he Presbytery of Huron-Perth is situated in an almost magical slice of Southern Ontario heaven. Tourists, summer cottagers, retirees and long-established small-town folks enjoy the perks of living in this paradise, and file through the doors of the presbytery's 24 churches (in 19 charges). Only three of those lie vacant. While some congregations attract 15 to 50 people on a Sunday, there are others, like St. Mary's that holds two services for its 230 weekly parishioners (in a town of 6,200) and Knox, Listowel, which welcomes 148 worshippers in a town of 5,400.

With 71 per cent of Huron County's population claiming British ancestry, the flock for Presbyterian churches seems solid. They haven't yet had to contend with the rapidly changing demographics of urban centres. Overall, their numbers are actually improving. While the number of adherents has dropped by 114 between 2003 and 2004, both their members (up 170 to 5,348) and attendance (from 1,690 to 2,005) increased over the same time.

Yet, the presbytery has the same woes of other rural and small-town areas—that of losing residents (particularly young ones) to the lure of job prospects in big cities. Huron County has more census farms (3,260) and more acres of farmland (711,525) than any other county or district in the province. And as Terry Hastings, minister at Knox, Stratford, said, as people leave the farms, there simply isn't anyone left in the ranks. "There's really no growth base to call upon. There's no new blood, so when people leave or die, there's no one to replace them," he said. "There are some congregations doing outreach to the community, but there



An annual intergenerational pie-making fundraiser at Melville, Brussels.

just aren't the numbers to be sustainable in the long run."

Rev. Peter Bush of Knox, Mitchell, (established in 1849) believes success for the future rests with lay ministry. "This presbytery and the church have to think differently of what normal church looks like. We haven't understood what a change that can make."

He said only "opening the doors to a radical commitment" to lay ministry will ensure that congregations where 20, 30 or 40 people gather will have a viable ministry in the long run. "The hardcore, financial reality is that unless you have 150 to 300 people in the pews on Sunday, you can't afford a full-time minister. We'll eventually get to the point where we need to put five or six congregations together to number that many. We need a new model."

Bush is strongly opposed to closing buildings just because a small congregation gathers there. He explores alternatives in his upcoming book, *Where 20 or 30 Are Gathered: Leading Worship in the Small Church*, which he wrote with Christine O'Reilly, minister at Knox, Thedford and St. Andrew's, Watford.

Bush said the General Assembly has heard inklings of some ministers' desires to enhance lay ministry in the church, but according to him, the assembly "hasn't taken them seriously."

In his congregation, they have two lay worship teams who each handle worship preparation, planning and execution every six weeks. They also have two lay preachers. The congregation helps train other congregations wanting to move in the same vein.

With the presbytery so steeped in history (every congregation began in the mid- to late-1800s), it may be that long-time members (many of whom are descendants of the congregations' founders) are reluctant to change. But Bush says this isn't necessarily the case. "It can go both ways," he said. "Part of the history is that there has been change," noting the addition of using organs during worship and incorporating contemporary music into services. "The history isn't necessarily a problem. It can be a tool. People may think, 'They changed in the past, we can change in the future.'"

Knox, Bayfield, knows what it's like to rely on other forms of ministry. For about



25 years, they've employed a summer student to minister to their then-seasonal church. The number of up-and-coming ministers who have passed through Bayfield's doors is something the congregation is proud of. "A significant portion of Presbyterian ministers have passed through our hands," said Ed Kelly, an elder and member of the church for about 20 years. "They get topped up here before moving on. We're very pleased with our part in that." Some have called Knox the church's "other seminary" because of the function it has served.

Although the small town of Bayfield "is plagued with all the usual problems," according to Kelly, such as losing teens and youth from church, families moving to cities, seniors dying, and no industry in the town to bring new blood, things are looking up for the congregation. After several years of gradually extending the church's season, it is now a year-round church. They inducted a permanent minister in October.

Knox, Stratford, (established in 1844) has many projects underway. One program that is taking off is their wiggyery (see March 2005 *Record*). Started in Nov. 2004, the wiggyery offers wigs, hats and scarves to cancer patients in the community. Within the first month, half a dozen people called on the service and Hastings said it keeps growing. They're even helping other congregations start similar projects.

Knox also sent two teams to Mississippi to help clean-up after Hurricane Katrina. The teams are some of the first organized by the national church, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (USA). "It's been a super-active year for the congregation," said Hastings. "It's exciting to be a part of it."

Knox has also been working closely with St. Andrew's, Stratford, established in 1838, making it the oldest church in the city. The two congregations are in preliminary talks about possibly merging and have enjoyed a close mission relationship because of it. They are currently working on a Habitat for Humanity project in nearby St. Mary's.

Rev. Cathrine Campbell, presbytery clerk and minister at Melville, Brussels, and Knox, Belgrave, said the challenges of the presbytery can be found in many



**The Canadian Foodgrains Bank has benefited from the hard work of many in the presbytery, where a growing project has contributed \$1-million-worth of grain over 10 years.**

others—including money issues and dwindling numbers. However, she said even in small congregations, the members are active and lively. "It's healthy in the sense that there is strong lay leadership in many churches. They have a can-do attitude." She said this can partially be attributed to the legacy of their ancestors, who founded many of the congregations

### **'It's healthy in the sense that there is strong lay leadership in many churches. They have a can-do attitude'**

in the presbytery. "If I disappeared tomorrow, my congregations would continue. They just get on with things."

She noted that the area is one where church is still a part of the community fabric. Even Melville in Brussels, a town of 1,200 with five churches, manages to continue its work. The Women's Missionary Society has been active in the charge since 1884. Melville is wheelchair accessible and offers earphones for the hearing impaired. A parish nurse has volunteered there for about seven years. They hold a Robbie Burns dinner, a special pie-making event to raise funds and an Easter breakfast run by the youth, which raises money for a child in Africa.

Knox, Goderich, also has a parish nurse, and was actually the first Presby-

terian church in the area to offer this service. Established in 1835, the beautiful building has been part of Doors Open Goderich, showcasing its rich history and lovely architecture. With more than 180 people attending each Sunday, the church offers two services—traditional and contemporary. They have several choirs including a hand bell, chancel, junior and a praise band. It is also wheelchair accessible, responding to the town's growing retirement community.

A project led by Knox, Monkton, and Knox, Cranbrook, is a fitting one for a rural charge. In its twelfth year, the charge runs a growing project for Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This year they had 88 acres planted in corn and soybeans with all proceeds going to CFGB. The farmers do the work and about 10 partnering congregations provide funds for seeds and needed supplies. The project has grown every year since its inception. "We're just a small rural congregation, but it's part of our identity," said Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee.

Since donations to CFGB are matched by the federal government on a 4:1 basis, the project—one of the first such Presbyterian projects created—has raised nearly \$1 million over the last 10 years. "It's a project that makes sense for a rural congregation," said McDonald-Lee. "We're farmers helping farmers; doing what we do best to help others." ☺



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Chesley, Geneva Church; Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie, RR 3, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0; Phone: 519-363-5392; Fax: 519-363-0975

Cromarty, Cromarty Presbyterian Church & Hibbert United Church (an ecumenical two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Gwen Brown, PO Box 2418, Exeter, ON N0M 1S7; 519-235-3701; kintail@tcc.on.ca.

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Hamilton, Chalmers; Robert Geddes, South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Clarendon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

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London, Korean Christian; Mr. Sam Lim, 530 Topping Lane, London, ON N6J 3M7; Bus: 519-472-0360; Home: 519-681-3828 samlimca@yahoo.ca;

Markdale, Cooke's; Feversham, Burns; Rev. Steve Webb; 136 Henry St., Meaford, ON N4L 1E2; 519-538-5095

Niagara Falls, Drummond Hill Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Doug Robinson, 24 Clairmont St., Thorold, ON L2V 1R3; 905-227-4844 or 905-227-9450; robinson@vaxxine.com.

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Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Interim Minister to begin April 2006; Rev. Terry Samuel, PO Box 587, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0; 519-542-2253; terry.samuel@sympatico.ca.

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Windsor, Chinese Church; Half-time, Cantonese-speaking; Wendy Paterson, 3200 Woodland, Windsor, ON N9E 1Z5; 519-972-3627; paulinmemorial@on.aibn.com.



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7:30 p.m.

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Prince Albert, SK S6V 4N1; 306-922-2718;  
geoyando@sasktel.net.

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev.  
Annabelle Wallace, 436 Spadina Cres. E,  
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Interim Moderator Rev. Harry Currie, 10025  
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hcurrie@incenre.net.  
Stony Plain, AB, Parkland First; New Church  
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Glenn Ball, Sherwood Park Presbyterian  
Church, 265 Fir St., Sherwood Park, AB  
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**Synod of British Columbia**

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Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 1L4; 604-822-0638;  
pcrowell@vst.edu.  
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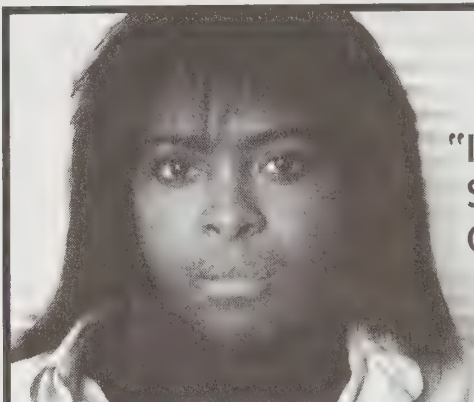
**Inductions, Ordinations  
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# called to wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

December is a special time for Christians; a time to celebrate the birth of Christ. Some of the people in your community or at your school may not celebrate Christmas. They may be from a different country or have a different religious faith.

It is important for us to respect others.

Let's find out more about two special December Holidays...



## HANUKKAH (or Chanukah)

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights or Feast of Dedication, is a Jewish holiday that is celebrated for eight days. Jews light candles, eat latkes, play with dreidels and give money or gifts.

Here is an easy Hanukkah craft for you to try:



### Milk Carton Dreidel

*You will need:*

pencils, glue, paint and paintbrushes, small milk cartons.

Fold tops of milk cartons down to make boxes.

Mix a little glue with paint and let children paint boxes.

Poke pencil through box from top downward so point is on bottom.

Now spin and enjoy!

## RAMADAN

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. During the month, Muslims fast (do not eat) from sunrise to sunset. In the evening and in the morning before the sun comes up, they eat small meals. During this month, they take extra time for family, inner reflection, and spiritual growth. Read the poem below to learn more about Ramadan!



### A Ramadan Poem

The holy month of Ramadan  
For the Muslims has begun  
Praising God through the day  
from dawn to dusk we fast and pray.  
We pay Zakat (Charity) for those in need,  
trying our best to do good deeds.  
When the sun has set, and day is done  
I'll break the chain, but only one.  
By the end of Ramadan,  
this whole chain will be all gone!  
It's time to celebrate and share in the fun!!!

### Holiday Prayer

Dear God,  
Thank you for the diverse  
and interesting world we  
live in. Help us to respect  
each other and celebrate our  
differences. Make me a  
channel of your peace this  
December.  
Amen.

To learn more about holiday around the world that happen all year long, visit [www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/](http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/)





# Beyond boundaries

*God made a divine border-crossing to be with us*

**C**ontrasting images of the Holy Family have shaken my reality as I write this column in mid-October and think forward to the Advent season when it will be published.

Last Sunday, I preached in the new Holy Family Roman Catholic Church in Medicine Hat at an ecumenical service celebrating Alberta's centennial. The family of God in that community joyfully expressed unity and shared vision as we minimized the walls that often divide Christians. The massive metal sculpture in the narthex depicts a delighted family at play with Jesus, at about age seven, laughing with his parents.

**As a global organization, the church can speak prophetically, giving voice to those who have no voice, in order that the gifts of the advent of Jesus Christ – hope, peace, joy and love – are truly experienced by the whole family of God**

In contrast, the following Friday, a grim image of the Holy Family was reflected in the border town of Sasabe, Mexico. There, I watched a young family, water jug in hand, begin a perilous trip across the Arizona desert. The family—a man, a woman and a baby propped on her hip—are Mexican migrants who are desperate to flee. Like Mary, Joseph and Jesus on their way to Egypt, they set out on a treacherous journey, vulnerable and poor.

My husband, Matthew, and I were at the border that Friday as part of a BorderLinks mission tour. BorderLinks is an ecumenical, faith-based organization that focuses on education around border issues. Our group of 14 was led by Rick Ufford-Chase, Moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and co-founder of BorderLinks in Tucson, Ariz. The trip was

designed as an immersion experience to create dialogue among North Americans at the place where the First World and the Third World meet.

The day we crossed the border going south, over 1,000 undocumented migrants crossed the border going north. It was a slow day. In peak season, 3,000 migrants per day attempt the crossing. Many are returned by U.S. Border Patrol; many make it; and, tragically, many die in the desert.

In Mexico, we spoke with migrants and heard their heart wrenching stories of having to leave home to find work to feed their families. For two nights we

stayed with families in a squatters' community in Nogales. We were received with grace by a family who could not offer plumbing or electricity, but whose hospitality was generous.

Since the creation of the free trade zone along the border, U.S. and Canadian companies have opened manufacturing facilities in Mexico. Farms and local industries that once supported Mexican communities are unable to compete. As a result, migrants move north to find jobs, resulting in massive social problems. Faced with these issues, along with scarce and low paying jobs, many Mexicans are unable to earn a living wage and cross the border looking for work. Due to increased militarization of the U.S. border, particularly in urban areas, undocumented migrants have few options but to cross at dangerous places—like the desert.

The issues are complex and relevant

for Canadian Christians. As the church, in a time of globalization, we need to be aware of the ways that trade strategies and public policies affect us and our neighbours. As a global organization, the church can speak prophetically, giving voice to those who have no voice, in order that the gifts of the advent of Jesus Christ—hope, peace, joy and love—are truly experienced by the whole family of God.

There are national borders, but there are also boundaries and borders in our communities that create insiders and outsiders. As Christians, we must be aware of and attentive to the borders that divide and exclude people.

In the season of Advent and Christmas, we celebrate the Incarnation which is a divine border-crossing in which God became human to dwell among us. Jesus crossed borders throughout his ministry, with those of other regions, with poor people and rich people, with women, with children, with those in authority. His life began when no one would make room for his family and his birth. The rest of his life was spent making room for outsiders to be included in the fullness of God's love.

May the gift of Emmanuel, God with us, bless you and your family, and all the families of the world this Christmas.

Peace,

## MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

### **December**

**4**      Worship at St. Giles', Calgary

¿CUANTOS MAS? VAN MAS DE 2000...

Jean Morris and Rick Ufford-Chase, Moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), at the Mexican/US border where a monument has been erected in memory of migrants who died in the desert trying to cross the border.



## Cover artwork contest

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